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**THE TRUTH ABOUT THE
PEACE TREATIES**

THE 'TRUTH ABOUT THE
PEACE TREATIES

BY

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

VOLUME I

LONDON
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IN GREAT BRITAIN BY FURNI
PAULTON

PREFACE

WHEN a man begins to acquire an entirely new art in his seventieth year, he cannot hope to attain proficiency in it. In these volumes, therefore, I am merely endeavouring to narrate simply, clearly and truthfully the story of the Peace-making as a man who was present at the Peace Conference and witnessed its proceedings throughout. I have set down the facts faithfully, without reference to their bearing on subsequent developments which may be held to condemn or justify the framers of the Treaty according as they may be interpreted by individual opinion. I have also written without any consideration of the effect which a plain statement of the truth may have upon present controversies.

Up to middle age I was a practising lawyer, whose business consisted largely in sifting, selecting and weighing evidence, both oral and documentary, with a view to presenting the case as a whole to trained judges and to a jury of citizens.

Any experienced lawyer knows that, in preparing a brief for a case, no more fatal error can be committed than the suppression or distortion of any relevant fact or document. Apart from the moral condemnation which such an act merits, it is a crime against professional discretion and efficiency. In that spirit, and with that experience in my memory, I have chosen the material at my disposal for the book.

But if an author, in recording events in which he personally took a prominent part, owes a duty to the public not to misinform or mislead them, the

public also have their duty to discharge, in acquainting themselves with the real facts, lest they blame the framers of the Treaty for the way in which it has been disregarded and abused by others, or misjudge the action of men who honestly did their best to serve them in an emergency which would try the head and nerve of any man to the utmost limit.

Let the critics of the Treaties take the highest standard of right attained in any civilised community or between one civilised nation and another, and then measure the Peace settlement by that canon. As one of the authors of that settlement I protest against its being judged on the subsequent abuse of its provisions and powers by some of the nations who dictated its terms. The merits of a law cannot be determined by a fraudulent interpretation of its clauses by those who are in a position temporarily to abuse legal rights and to evade honourable obligations. It is not the Treaties that should be blamed. The fault lies with those who repudiated their own solemn contracts and pledges by taking a discreditable advantage of their temporary superiority to deny justice to those who, for the time being, were helpless to exact it. It is not fair to charge the authors of the Treaties with these abuses or their consequences.

For this reason, therefore, the intentions of the Treaty-makers, and their painstaking and honest efforts to carry them out, should be revealed to the public. It is right that these things should be known by a critical generation, which has been misled as to the truth by those who were anxious to shift the responsibility for their own failures from the shoulders that ought to bear them.

Bron-y-de, Churt,
September, 1938.

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

As the World War of 1914-1918 was the greatest clash of arms between nations ever waged on this earth, so was the Treaty of Versailles (with the ancillary Treaties of St. Germain, Trianon, Neuilly and Sèvres) the most far-reaching and comprehensive settlement ever effected in any international dispute. It was inevitable that so colossal a readjustment of national boundaries in four continents and of international relations in five continents, where feuds have been fought out between races for countless years, should be provocative of controversy and be responsible for a complication of misunderstandings. It will be many generations before the world settles down to a calm appreciation of the merits and demerits of the terms of these revolutionary compacts. Before they are finally accepted rough edges will have to be smoothed, inequities be set right and provisions which experience has proved to be unworkable as they stand will have to be amended and made more practicable and generally acceptable. But the first step towards a wise provision, where found to be imperative, is a thorough comprehension of the actual terms of the original text, of the reasons and motives which prompted the framers of the Treaty in their decisions, and a dispassionate and impartial examination of the soundness or the unsoundness of these decisions. To these studies must be added a stern investigation of the reasons

*Vast scope
of Peace
Settlement*

TRUTH ABOUT PEACE TREATIES

one of the most beneficent provisions of the Treaty have failed to take effect. Has the failure been due to any inherent defect in the Treaty itself, or was it attributable to a refusal to honour its provisions by the nations that were primarily responsible for drafting it and by many of those who signed it? A broken Treaty is like a broken pitcher—it no longer holds water.

It is safe to say that ninety-nine out of every hundred of the critics of the Treaty have never made themselves acquainted with its stipulations. They have based their hostility on distorted versions of these stipulations written by partisans who disliked the Treaty because either they suffered its penalties or hated its authors. Most of the censors have had their minds poisoned by denunciatory phrases which they unwarily swallow without examination. When world peace depends on questions arising out of this momentous settlement after a World War, it is essential that the actual stipulations should be mastered and comprehended. Our endeavour will be to give a fair and authentic account, of the inexorable facts upon which the Treaty was based, of the aims of the men who were mainly responsible for drafting this momentous document, of the principles upon which they framed it, of the arguments and circumstances that moved them to take the course they followed, of the conditions which circumscribed their judgment, of the methods they adopted to achieve their purpose and to overcome their difficulties, and—most important of all—of the actual and not the suppositious provisions of the Treaty.

Before entering upon a narrative of the events, negotiations and conferences that led to the shaping

Illusions regarding inspiration and authorship of the Treaty, there are at least two fixed illusions that must be dispelled in order to obtain a clear perspective of events and conclusions. (The first is the statement that the harsher conditions of the Treaty were determined when the nations responsible for its terms were intoxicated and ensavaged by victory over a foe that had slaughtered millions of their young men, devastated some of their fairest provinces and threatened civilisation with a servitude to be imposed and enforced by an unconquerable sword.) Nations lacerated with wounds and grief-stricken by the loss of millions of dead were not unnaturally drunk with joy at their escape from a misery which threatened to terminate in an even greater and more unshakable catastrophe—the enslavement of mankind by a military despotism. If the terms were conceived in that state of delirium then it can be said—and said with truth—that no human beings in that mental condition are capable of delivering a fair and balanced judgment on the terms to be imposed against foes who inflicted such hurt and inspired such dread before they were ultimately vanquished, or on the guarantees to be secured against the repetition of such a calamity. I propose to examine that accusation against the inherent justice of the Treaty.

The second misapprehension is due to the belief entertained and exploited in some quarters that all the harsh conditions of the Treaty emanated from one set of negotiators, whereas all its idealistic stipulations were inspired by a nobler mind. These two complete distortions of the actual historical facts are due to violent personal and factional prejudices inevitably roused by challenging events and to that

kind of slipshod perusal of documents and of the course of events which invariably characterise most controversies where international, political, and personal antipathies are intermixed. There are multitudes of violent controversialists who have only read versions of the Treaty in epithets coined by its opponents, and who therefore persist in believing that it consists exclusively of the penal clauses they distort and thus condemn, and that the liberation of oppressed races, the Covenant of the League, the proposals for general disarmament and the establishment of an International Labour Office have no connection with the Treaty, but were carried over the heads of the statesmen they dislike by the influence and the insistence of others. The type of politician who feeds his convictions on these acrid and corrosive quackeries does not trouble to analyse their contents before he swallows them.

First of all I intend to deal with the fundamental misconception of the true history of the Peace Settlement which takes for granted that its provisions were determined in the frenzied hour of triumph. There are two salient facts about this War which are not applicable to any other war previously waged—certainly not in the same degree or in the same measure. The first is that it was not waged between mercenary armies but that the whole manhood of the combatant nations was engaged in the struggle—either in the fighting or in the preparations for it. All classes alike were drawn into the contest and all suffered alike. The sacrifices increased beyond any previous experience as the War continued. After the first impulse of zeal and anger died down the nations became too tired to feel or to feed enthusiasms and passions, and

*Why war
aims were
kept moderate*

it is not a reflection on the courage of any of the belligerents to say that a reasonable peace would have been welcomed by the majority of their people before the War was half over. Governments, in proclaiming their rival peace aims, were obliged to take full cognisance of this mood. Not only did death and wounds darken most households, but taxation and many irksome conditions which restricted habitual freedom had deprived the War of any popularity it ever enjoyed. The shoutings of the crowd which characterised the first days of the War in every country had been followed by a grim and sullen determination to see the struggle through to a just conclusion. No Government in any belligerent State could have prosecuted the War unless all ranks and grades of the nation were behind it. The Russian Revolution of March, 1917 and the events which followed it clearly demonstrate that fact. One Government after another in Russia did its best to continue the fight after the people had come to the conclusion that they had had enough of it. Czarist, Liberal and Socialist Ministries alike failed in their efforts because the peasants and workers were exhausted by the terrific strain of the conflict and disgusted with the shambles. They wanted to get out of them at any price. Governments in other belligerent countries had this startling development before their eyes eighteen months before the War came to an end. They therefore knew that it would be dangerous to exaggerate their demands beyond the acquiescence of their people. Naturally the tone and temper of public opinion had a readier response in official policy in a democratic country than in an autocratic State. But in no country were the people prepared to go on increasing their terrible sacrifices and burdens

merely in order to extend imperial boundaries, or to inflict punishment on the disturbers of the peace.

There was another element which exerted a powerful restraint on the proclamation of extravagant or rapacious war aims—the effect such an exhibition of greed would have upon *Influence of Neutral and American opinion* Neutrals. Both the belligerent groups were anxious to secure the goodwill of Neutral countries—notably that of the United States of America. In a moment of reckless exaltation over her victories in Russia and Roumania, Germany defied the censoriousness of America on submarine warfare and paid the penalty of her rashness. Britain and France were sensitive to the importance of conciliating the United States. Allied statesmen were all conscious of the fact that a time would come when America could intervene with irresistible effect and that it would be unwise to antagonise its rulers and its peoples by an exhibition of greed or vindictiveness. Their peace aims were framed in such a way as to convince America, and especially the pacific and anti-Imperialist American President, that their objectives were fundamentally just.

The slightest acquaintance with the long process of deliberating and conferring inside and between the Allied nations, by which ideas as to the kind of peace which ought to be aimed at gradually grew and developed, will *Main features fixed before Versailles* show that the main outlines of the Treaty of Versailles were defined and fixed, not in the hour of victory, but during the years in which the struggle was going on and when the issue was still in doubt, when the nations saw ahead nothing but the prospect of the complete dissipation of their hard-earned treasure and the still darker outlook of the death or mutilation of

myriads of their picked men in the flower of their youth. The negotiations in Paris after the war were—fortunately—directed and fettered by terms carefully discussed and determined by and amongst the Allies when they had the example of Russia before their eyes; when the fortune of war seemed to lean against the Allies; when the enemy was still confident of victory and could proudly refer to a series of resplendent triumphs in support of his confidence; when pacifists in Allied countries did not conceal their concurrence in this pessimistic estimate of Allied prospects; and when many advocates of the Allied cause, like Lord Lansdowne and others, whose patriotic devotion to that cause was beyond question, had reluctantly arrived at the conclusion that a stalemate was the best result attainable if the struggle were continued any farther.

The first notable summary of the War aims of the British Empire was made by Mr. Asquith on September 25th, 1914, in a speech delivered at Dublin in which he said:—

*Mr. Asquith's
statement
of terms*

“Forty-four years ago, the time of the war of 1870, Mr. Gladstone used these words. He said, ‘The greatest triumph of our time will be the enthronement of the idea of public right as a governing idea of European policy.’ Nearly fifty years have passed; little progress it seems has yet been made of the great and beneficent change, but it seems to me now at this moment to be as good a definition as we could give of our ultimate policy. The idea of public right. What does it mean when translated into concrete terms? It means, first and foremost, a clear but definite repudiation of militarism as a governing factor in the relations of

States, and in the future moulding of the European world, which knows that room must be found and kept for the independent existence and free development of smaller nationalities, each for the life of its history and corporal consciousness of its own. Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries, Greece, and the Balkan States, they must be recognised as having exactly as good a title as their more powerful neighbours—more powerful in strength and wealth—exactly as good a title to a place in the sun. It means the final, or it ought to mean, perhaps, by a slow and gradual process, the substitution for force, for the nourishing of competing ambition, for the groupings of alliances, and the precarious equipoise of substituting for these things a real European partnership based upon the recognition of equal rights, established and enforced by common will.”

In his famous Guildhall speech on November 9th, 1914, he used words which are now historic:—

“We shall never sheathe the sword which we have not lightly drawn until Belgium recovers in full measure all and more than all that she has sacrificed, until France is adequately secured against the menace of aggression, until the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe are placed upon an unassailable foundation, and until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed.”

The French Prime Minister, M. Viviani, associated France with these declarations, but added the further statement:—

"France will lay down arms only . . . when the provinces torn from her have been rejoined to her for ever."

This speech was delivered on December 22nd, 1914.

*Summary
of initial
war aims*

The war aims of the Allies promulgated at the commencement of the War might therefore be thus summarised:—

(1) The vindication of international right against the tyranny of force used as an instrument not of righteousness but of arrogance, of greed and of national oppression.

(2) The complete restoration of the national independence and integrity of Belgium and Serbia.

(3) The defeat and destruction of Prussian militarism as a menace to the peace of the world.

(4) The establishment of the principle of international right on such firm foundations that the smaller and weaker nations could be guaranteed protection against the ruthlessness and aggressiveness of the strong.

(5) As far as France was concerned, the restoration of the lost provinces of Alsace-Lorraine.

These declarations of the purpose with which the Allied nations entered into the War were accepted with virtual unanimity by the people in every Allied country without any distinction of party. In the British Empire young men volunteered by the million, from every continent where the flag of Britain waves, to attain these objectives and to establish these principles on a firm foundation in the world.

No attempt was made by any of the Allied Governments to elaborate and work out the detailed application of these general pronouncements until the beginning of 1917. Meanwhile four events had occurred which necessitated an extension of the declarations hitherto made by the Allied Governments. First, the war with Turkey had assumed proportions and involved sacrifices which made it necessary to consider the application of the Asquith and Viviani pronouncements to the conditions of the Turkish Empire. The second event was the use made by the Germans of their colonies as bases for attack on the British Empire and its lines of communication and the considerable military operations which had consequently to be undertaken largely by the Dominion, Indian and Colonial troops in those colonies. In these two military undertakings alone the British Empire had been compelled to raise and maintain armies far more numerous and costly than those which Pitt and Castlereagh had to organise and equip in their colossal struggle against Napoleon. Allenby in his Palestine campaign and Maude in his march on Baghdad each had under his command an army more than twice as numerous as that which Wellington led in his peninsular campaign on his march from the Tagus to the Pyrenees. At the end of the War the British forces engaged in the Turkish campaigns numbered not far short of a million men. General Smuts in his conquest of Tanganyika commanded four times as many troops as Wolfe led in the battle that won Canada for the British flag. The flotillas and the forces which swept the Germans out of Samoa and New Guinea were much more powerful than those which wrested the West Indies from

the Spaniards or India from the French. These campaigns, waged in malarial jungle and across barren and burning deserts, attracted little attention in Britain during the World War. Considerable as were these enterprises standing alone, they sank into insignificance compared with the immense forces and the gigantic equipment maintained in France. Still, in life and treasure heavy sacrifices were incurred in these sideshows which wrenched from the hands of Germany an Empire covering millions of square miles. These conquests created a new factor which was not in the minds of Governments when war was first declared, but of which peacemakers at the end of the War were bound to take cognisance.

The third event which introduced a new element into the settlement of peace terms was the entry of Italy into the conflict. Of all the Allied Powers Italy was the only one who, as a condition precedent to her co-operation, exacted terms which involved a substantial territorial gain for herself. She bargained tenaciously about the spoils of victory ere she committed herself to come to the aid of the Allies. For months her statesmen negotiated with both sides on the basis of territorial concessions. The Allies were in a position to offer better terms and the Italian Government decided to throw in its lot with them.

This is not the place to discuss the merits of the Treaty of London negotiated in 1915 between Mr. Asquith and Lord Grey on behalf of the Allies and Baron Sonnino for Italy. It cannot be denied that at least a portion of the geographical extension of territory promised to Italy in the Treaty of London was in distinct contravention of the principles laid down by the Allied Governments as a justification to their

own people for calling upon them to face the horrors of a colossal war. It can be pleaded in extenuation of this descent of Allied statesmanship from the exalted level of the crusade they had launched for international right and liberty, that they were beginning to realise that the enterprise upon which they had embarked was beset with greater difficulties and perils than they had fully contemplated, and that success was not so assured as they had at first anticipated, and that they must seek—and if necessary, purchase—the assistance of an Ally which at the beginning of the War was bound by a Treaty of alliance to side with the Central Powers.

Let those who condemn Mr. Asquith and Lord Grey for negotiating that bargain reflect on the situation in April and May, 1915, when the Pact was signed. Things were not going too well on the various battle fronts. The effort to dislodge the Germans from France was not making any progress despite appalling losses of French and British lives. The Russian steam-roller was being pushed back with a greater velocity than it rolled forward. Victory was tarrying heavily on the way and its chariots were not in sight on the distant horizon. The Allied leaders had therefore to weigh the chances and to deliberate whether they could hope to win without sacrificing something of the objectives which they had set before themselves and the people they represented, in order to achieve the rest. It was a hard choice and one with which men are confronted in all the affairs of life. It is easy to judge harshly when the impending disaster has been averted partly by the methods which are condemned. How many of those who denounce the Treaty of Versailles would have acted differently from Mr.

Asquith and his Government when the choice was not impossibly between the triumph of Prussian militarism and a sure chance of its final defeat? This is no exaggeration of Mr. Asquith's dilemma. Had Italy not come into the War on our side in May, 1915, what would have occurred when Russia subsequently cracked up completely and left France and Britain alone to cope with the victorious armies of Germany and Austria? Whatever its motive or justification, the Pact of London was a bond which had to be honoured by the Allied Treaty makers, for by that time Italy had paid the price to the full in blood and treasure.) But those who framed the Peace Treaties (including President Wilson, who was no party to the London arrangement) were conscious that this engagement introduced new elements which affected any settlement with Austria and Turkey. It even modified prejudicially the legitimate interests of our Serbian allies. It must be admitted that the hacking of essentially Tyrolean villages and valleys from the rest of the Tyrol was incompatible with the principles of self-determination implicitly embodied in the original war aims of Allied statesmanship. When the time came to carry out the bargain, some of the terms almost caused a rupture amongst the victors. The trouble they are likely to make is not yet at an end.

A fourth element which the progress of this destructive war had brought into prominence was the devastation it wrought in the provinces where it was being waged. In the whole history of warfare up to that date there had been nothing to compare with it in the extent and thoroughness of the cost it incurred and the destruction it effected. It exceeded the wors

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anticipations of the students of modern warfare with its shattering weapons. The German march on Paris and the many sanguinary battles fought up to November, 1914, including the prolonged and fiercely contested battle of Ypres, hardly gave a foretaste of the indescribable havoc of which modern artillery was capable. The production of explosive shells on an immense scale on both sides began in the winter of 1914. By the end of 1916 the greater and more prosperous provinces of North-Eastern France were a scene of utter ruin and desolation. Factories had been demolished, considerable towns were in ruins, hundreds of villages and scores of thousands of farm-houses had been completely obliterated. The very surface of the ground over hundreds of square miles had been so scarred and churned up that no plough could find a few yards of level field for tillage of the tortured soil. Had Northern France been a virgin prairie, it would not have cost a pioneer a third as much in labour and material to bring it into cultivation as it did to restore this excoriated, pitted and poisoned wilderness to a condition which would fit it for production. Who was to bear the expense of that restoration—the invader or the invaded, the aggressor or his victim? By the year 1916 the question of reparation had assumed proportions unthought of in 1914. The principle of reparations had already been laid down in the category of Asquith and Viviani's war aims in reference to the wanton destruction of Belgian cities like Louvain. It was universally acknowledged amongst the Allied peoples that justice demanded the extension of that principle to the greater damage wrought by German aggression in some of those provinces of France where the ceaseless toil of its workers for centuries had enriched

the land and built up beneficent and prosperous industries.

When the War Cabinet, at the end of 1916, came to review and to elaborate in detail the War objectives of the Allies, they had full cognisance of all these four factors which had entered into the struggle since August, 1914. Only two of them introduced considerations which were not covered in principle by the Allied pronouncements of 1914—the fate of the German Colonies, and such of the territorial claims of Italy as were not covered by the designation of Italia Irredenta: the Southern Tyrol, part of the Dalmatian slopes, the Anatolian coast and Libya.

In the autumn of 1916, when the highest political circles were sibilant with peace whispers, the Prime Minister issued instructions to the Foreign Office to prepare a memorandum as to a suggested basis for a territorial settlement in Europe. It was prepared on two alternative assumptions. One was an Allied victory—the other a stalemate. It is an impressive document, well-informed, bold and far-seeing. Some of its proposals are startling. They are all well worthy of a careful perusal in view of recent developments. It is the first official pronouncement in which what came to be known as self-determination constituted the principle of a readjustment of national boundaries. It is also the first official document which contains a declaration in favour of the establishment of a League of Nations and a reduction in armaments. It reads as follows:—

“His Majesty’s Government have announced that one of their chief objects in the present war

The Foreign Office Memorandum on Territorial Settlement is to ensure that all the States of Europe, great and small, shall in the future be in a position to achieve their national development in freedom and security. It is clear, moreover, that no peace can be satisfactory to this country unless it promises to be durable, and an essential condition of such a peace is that it should give full scope to national aspirations as far as practicable. The principle of nationality should therefore be one of the governing factors in the consideration of territorial arrangements after the war.

For similar reasons we should avoid leaving any State subject to grievous economic disadvantage, as for instance by not providing it with the outlets necessary for its commercial development, since the absence of such facilities would necessarily affect the permanent character of any settlement.

In giving effect to the above principles, however, we are limited in the first place by the pledges already given to our Allies which may, as for instance in the case of Italy, be difficult to reconcile with the claims of nationalities. We must realise further that our Allies, apart from any promises which we may have made to them, may put forward claims conflicting with the principle of nationality. In such an event our attitude should be guided by circumstances generally and British interests in particular.

Lastly, we should not push the principle of nationality so far as unduly to strengthen any State which is likely to be a cause of danger to European peace in the future."

In dealing with Belgium, it declares emphatically in favour of her being largely indemnified by Germany for the losses she has suffered.

Restoration of Belgium "It will remain a vital British interest after the war, as it was before it, to prevent Germany from obtaining access to the Belgian coasts. Recent events have shown conclusively that that interest is not effectively safeguarded by treaties providing for Belgian neutrality under international guarantees; we submit that Belgian independence will be better secured by substituting a treaty of permanent alliance between Belgium, France, and ourselves in the place of the present safeguards. It is understood that Belgium herself would welcome such an alliance.

This proposal is open to the objection that it commits us to continental alliances and a probable increase of our military obligations. In our opinion, however, there is no alternative so long as it is a vital interest of this country to prevent the German invasion of Belgium, and so long as the latter is incapable of undertaking its own defence."

It declares in favour of the incorporation of Luxemburg into Belgium, from which it was detached in 1839.

As to Alsace and Lorraine, it will be "mainly guided by French views." It would favour a further "rectification of frontier on strategic grounds, provided the wishes of the population are consulted," but would "deprecate, as far as possible, any attempt on the part of France to incorporate any considerable

extent of German territory on the plea of strategical exigencies."

As to the future of Heligoland and the Kiel Canal, it refrains from making any definite suggestions, leaving these questions to the Admiralty.

On Poland it mentions three alternative suggestions but declares finally in favour of the "creation of a
Poland Polish kingdom under a Russian Grand Duke."

"This Kingdom would be merely connected with Russia by the personal link of its ruler, but would in every other respect enjoy complete independence. The grant of independence under such conditions would satisfy to the full the national aspirations of the Polish nation, and if it could be coupled with the acquisition of a commercial outlet for Poland in the Baltic, it would lead to the establishment of a State that, from the point of view of national feeling and economic interests, promises stability. Given the strong race antagonism of Poland to Prussia, which has secured during this war the open adhesion of the Russian Poles and the tacit support of what is best in Galicia and the Grand Duchy of Posen, there is every reason to expect that the future Polish State would become a buffer State between Russia and Germany in the best sense of the word, that is to say, it would secure for Russia a Poland that would be most unlikely to be found in league against Russia, as long as Russia remained faithful to the programme of the Allies, which is respect for the independence of small nations.

This new Polish State would be one of the most powerful units among the independent countries

which are expected to come into existence upon the dissolution of Austria-Hungary. From the point of view of England and France this conglomeration of States would prove an efficient barrier against Russian preponderance in Europe and German extension towards the Near East, because these States would be happy and contented in the realisation of their national aspirations, and strong as regards their economic future, which would be secured by the possession of their natural commercial outlets to the sea. The Congress of Vienna attempted to secure a balance of power against France by the creation of kingdoms which were expected to prove a formidable barrier to any French aggression in the future. But these creations did not fulfil that expectation, because they were artificial and did not bring contentment and prosperity to the people who formed part of them. The solution we recommend has this in its favour, that it is based on more solid and lasting foundations than were obtained by the provisions of the Treaty of Vienna. We are quite alive to the opposition such a proposal may encounter at Petrograd; we also realise that it is not likely to be overcome unless the military situation should oblige Russia to require Anglo-French co-operation in order to secure the evacuation of her territory, which is now in the hands of the enemy. We do not presume for one moment to offer suggestions as to how we can overcome any such opposition, but we should like to place it on record that the solution which we have submitted is the best in the interests of the Allies, as it will preserve for them the reputation of good faith, and constitute a great asset in their favour among the nationalities

that are about to be created by their victory; it will seriously weaken Prussia by withdrawing from her a very capable and prosperous population, together with the loss of considerable coalfields in Silesia, and above all it will considerably add to the number of States in the future composition of Europe whose desires and interests will all tend in the direction of establishing the rule of right over the rule of might. In other words, we shall assist in creating nations that will be keen in their sympathy with our desire for a rule of peace, which shall materially decrease the burden of armaments that so heavily hampered the national and economic aspirations of the people of Europe.

We annex a map based on ethnological lines which, after enquiry regarding the distribution of the Poles, shows the frontiers a new Polish State might fairly claim. The figures of the population are taken from the German official census."

As to the Balkans, it is disposed to treat Bulgaria generously in spite of its defection and the trouble which that gave to the Allies.

The Balkans Greece and Roumania, which at that time had refused to throw in their lot with the Allies, "deserve but little consideration at the hands of the Allies." But "as regards Roumania, the Allies are bound by the pledge given by Russia, under which Bukowina and the Roumanian portion of Transylvania were to be assigned to Roumania." Beyond that they are not prepared to go.

In dealing with the problems of Serbia, Montenegro and the Southern Slavs, it says:—

"The agreement concluded between Italy and her Allies on the 26th April, 1915, inasmuch as it concedes to the former the whole of Istria, a considerable strip of the Dalmatian coast with most of the islands, in which indisputably the population is predominantly Slav, unfortunately constitutes a very distinct violation of the principle of nationalities, and there is consequently no doubt that it involves the risk of producing the usual results, namely, irredentism, and lack of stability and peace. We understand, however, from competent and moderate judges of the situation, that there is every prospect of the parties reaching a satisfactory settlement by direct friendly negotiation.

This departure from one of our guiding principles need not, therefore, cause unnecessary alarm, and, in any case, we are precluded from suggesting any other solution in view of the binding nature of our engagements towards Italy."

It considers the question of the future of Montenegro:—

*Future of
Montenegro*

"Shall this country be revived as an independent State or be absorbed into Serbia?"

Montenegrin policy, at no time of the most reliable, has since the commencement of the war surpassed itself in duplicity, and has proved distinctly unfriendly to the Allies. There is little doubt that King Nicolas and his Ministers were in direct communication with the Austrians, and that but for their treachery a far more successful resistance to the enemy's advance through the Sanjak of

Novibazar and Montenegro might have been made. The King, therefore, deserves no consideration at the hands of the Allies, and in our judgment after such conduct his restoration or that of any of his family who were parties to his treachery is much to be deprecated, and, indeed, should be so far as possible opposed.

The resurrection of Montenegro as an independent State under another King must presumably depend on the wishes of the Montenegrins themselves, but it should be borne in mind that in any case such a State will serve no useful purpose; it will in the future as in the past not be self-supporting, and be dependent on the charity of the Powers. Its absorption by Serbia is therefore on the whole much to be desired."

As to the future of the Yugoslavs in Austria, it declares that:—

"The end which the Jugo-Slavs have in view is the liberation of all Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes from the domination of Austria-Hungary or any other Power and their union into one State. They desire, however, a free and voluntary union, not one imposed from without implying subjection of any one portion to the other. The Croats and Slovenes no doubt admire Serbia for her fighting qualities and look to her to assist their liberation, but on the other hand they consider themselves superior to Serbia in culture and education, and rely on this superiority to assume the leadership in the future confederation of Southern Slav States.

*Greater
Jugo-Slavia*

The statement made by Sir E. Grey to M. Supilo on the 1st September, 1915, that, provided Serbia agrees, Bosnia, Herzegovina, South Dalmatia, Slavonia, and Croatia shall be permitted to decide their own fate is therefore far more in accord with Jugo-Slav ideals than the assurance previously given, and should be the determining factor in guiding our policy on this question. We consider that Great Britain should in every way encourage and promote the union of Serbia, Montenegro, and the Southern Slavs into one strong federation of States with the view to its forming a barrier to any German advance towards the East."

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"The Jugo-Slavs desire that the boundaries of their prospective Confederation shall be determined on ethnological lines, and upon this basis they lay claim to extensive territories. These would include, in addition to Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia, portions of Carinthia and Styria, the whole of Gorizia, Carniola, Istria, and the coast, together with islands down to the Albanian frontier. The northern frontier of their State would run approximately from Graz in a south-easterly direction along the Drave, then north of the provinces of Baranja, Backa, and the Banat, along the Moris River to Arad, thence south past Temesvar to the point where the Roumanian western frontier joins the Danube.

Although these claims may appear extravagant at first sight, the Jugo-Slavs maintain that in all these localities the population is predominantly Slāv (*vide* Appendix III).

APPENDIX III

The Jugo-Slavs claim that they form the compact population of the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro (population, 5,000,000), of the Jugo-Slav provinces in Austria-Hungary (Jugo-Slav population, 8,000,000), and of the Italian district west of Gorizia (40,000 Jugo-Slavs), whereas 1,500,000 Jugo-Slavs live as emigrants in overseas countries.

In Austria-Hungary the Jugo-Slavs are subordinated to two dominant State organisations, viz. the German and the Magyar. Their territory is broken up into ten provinces; they are politically oppressed, socially persecuted, and in every way hampered and menaced in their intellectual, economic, and national development.

There are roughly 2,100,000 Jugo-Slavs under the German Administration in Vienna. Of these, 410,000 live in Southern Styria, 120,000 in Southern Carinthia, 490,000 in Carniola, 155,000 in Gorizia-Gradisca, 70,000 in Trieste, 225,000 in Istria, and 610,000 in Dalmatia.

Under the Magyar domination there are 3,200,000 Jugo-Slavs, viz. 2,300,000 in Croatia-Slavonia and 900,000 in Southern and South-western Hungary (in the Medjumurje, along the Styrian frontier, in the Baranja, Backa, and Banat).

A joint Austria-Hungarian Administration controls the 1,900,000 Jugo-Slavs living in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Finally, there are 400,000 Jugo-Slavs under Italian rule.

In so far as the Adriatic littoral is affected the Jugo-Slavs will have to conform to the requirements of the Italian Agreement, but outside of the regions referred to in this Agreement we see no reason why their claims should not be admitted to their full extent at the expense of Austria, though we suggest some reservations in respect of certain territories which they claim in Hungary. Our reasons for this recommendation appear below:—”

Then they come to deal with the future of Austro-Hungary and here they take a very bold line:—

“The future of Austria-Hungary will, of course, depend very largely on the military situation existing at the end of this war. If the *Future of Austro-Hungary :* situation should be one which enables the Allies to dispose of its future, there *The future of German Austria* seems very little doubt that, in accordance with the principle of giving free play to nationalities, the Dual Monarchy, which in its present composition is a direct negation of that principle, should be broken up, as there is no doubt that all the non-German parts of Austria-Hungary will secede. The only objection that might occur to this radical solution would be the large accession of strength to the German Empire in population and in wealth by the inclusion of the Austrian provinces. We have, however, to remember that a solution favourable to the Allies will deprive Germany of a population considerably in excess of this Austrian increase. It will be deprived of Alsace-Lorraine, Schleswig, and the Grand Duchy of Posen. This will be a direct diminution of Prussian power. It will receive, it is true, the

Austrian population, but this accession will add to the importance and influence of the non-Prussian States of the German Empire. Moreover, it will mean a considerable increase in the Catholic elements of Germany, and everything tending to decrease Prussian power will naturally tend in the direction of a more permanent settlement in Europe, as it will diminish the aggressive tendencies of the Central European Empires through the weakening of Prussia. We therefore think that the drifting of the Austrian provinces to Germany need not alarm the Allies, who are not out to crush Germany, but do intend as far as they can to impair the hegemony of Prussia over other States. The preparations for this war, the impulse to this war, the aggressive designs connected with this war, are all traceable to Prussian enterprise, and it is not extravagant to hope that a defeated Prussia will considerably lose its power for evil, and should it further be confronted by a large, wealthy, and influential southern Federation within its own borders, we shall not be far wrong in expecting to achieve the diminution of its influence, which can only be brought about by the play of political forces within the German Federation. Assuming the Allies, for purely political reasons, contemplated the keeping alive of an independent Dual Monarchy, they would have to consider very seriously whether it would be possible to secure the real independence of Vienna from Berlin. In the light of past events we do not hesitate to come to the conclusion that whether the Central Powers are victorious or not, Austria-Hungary will remain, to all intents and purposes, subservient to its ally. A victorious Prussia would, as we have already seen during the course

of the war, still further absorb Austria-Hungary within its political and economic orbit. A defeated Prussia would equally be able to persuade Austria-Hungary that her only future lies within a still closer amalgamation of the two countries. There is no doubt that there has been in the past, and might be in the future, a party both in Austria and in Hungary who are strongly opposed to the German hegemony, but from all the information at our disposal this party in both portions of the Dual Monarchy is a minority, and likely to remain one. An Austria-Hungary, therefore, at the beck and call of Prussia is not a solution which the Allies should or could contemplate; the survival of Austria-Hungary could not be reconciled with the objects for which the Allies went to war, and even if they decided to sacrifice these objects for political expediency, the weapons they intended to forge, that is to say, a diminished but independent Austro-Hungary State, would fail to be effective for the purpose for which it would be intended. On the assumption, therefore, that the solution which we recommend be adopted, we find no difficulty in disposing of those portions of the Dual Monarchy which are likely to constitute the Slav State of the South."

As to Bohemia, they examined three different proposals:—

*Bohemia
to be tacked
on to
Poland*

First, the formation of an independent State,

Secondly, the linking of Bohemia with a Southern-Slav State,

Thirdly, tacking it on to the Kingdom of Poland.

They are of opinion that his accession to the Union "is desired both by farseeing Czechs and Poles." *Empire. Moravia.*

"The latter realise fully that the addition of Bohemia to Poland would afford and promote very considerably the economic development of Poland. The Czechs, on the other hand, fully appreciate that they would benefit by the superior culture and civilisation of the Poles. At this stage we do not propose to go further than indicate what, in our opinion, would be the best solution for the Austro-Hungarian question."

Summing up their suggestions about the future of the Austrian Empire, they say:

"Let the Slav provinces of Austria constitute themselves into a Southern Slav State; let the German provinces of Austria be incorporated in the German Empire; let Bohemia be linked up to Poland; and let Hungary be formed of the purely Magyar portions of the country into an independent State with the fully secured commercial outlets to the Adriatic at Fiume, and by means of the Danube to the Black Sea. This solution promises permanency, as it will be based on the national and economic elements of the countries affected by this settlement.

If Hungary is, however, to be an independent State with any chance of vitality it would be inexpedient to deprive it of territory beyond that which is necessary in order to conform to the principle of nationality. This boundary has the further recommendation of being in accordance

with the Serbian strategical requirements for possession of the country on the north bank of the Danube opposite Belgrade, and of not conflicting with the Roumanian claims.

The above settlement may at first sight appear somewhat academic, being as it is mainly in accordance with national aspirations, but we quite appreciate that it may have to be modified in deference to the views of Russia, geographical configuration, military considerations, &c., our main object at present was to devise a scheme that promised permanency from the national point of view.”.

They have then a very searching study upon the question of armaments.

“In putting forward the above considerations we have endeavoured to approach the settlement, after the war, mainly from a political point of view. We have attempted to draw up a scheme which is not confined to the promotion alone of British interests as regards either territorial acquisitions or the establishment of British spheres of influence. We have tried to work out a scheme that promises permanency; we have aimed at a reconstruction of the map of Europe intended to secure a lasting peace. We have been guided by the consideration that peace remains the greatest British interest. The most direct way to this end is, of course, to arrest the race in armaments, which has gone on increasing for the last forty years. This object can be best achieved by means of general arbitration treaties and the consequent reduction of standing armies

*Permanent,
not vindictive
settlement the
objective*

and navies. This ideal is doubtless common ground amongst all the Allies, but Great Britain would probably be prepared to face greater sacrifices than other countries in order to achieve that end. Public opinion in this country would be willing, we think, to go very far indeed in this direction, but the danger we have to guard against is that if we succeeded in persuading the enemy to come to any kind of arrangement of the sort we must see to it that he is both able and willing to abide by his pledges. In view of the attitude which Germany has adopted in the past on this question we entertain but little hope that the Germans will be willing to approach the subject in any sincere and serious spirit unless they have no option. If we contemplate a condition of things which would force the Allies to discuss terms of peace with the enemy on more or less equal terms, we have no hesitation in saying that we should either be met by a direct negative on the part of the German Government even to consider the subject, or we should be invited to submit proposals which the German Government would either prove to be unworkable or which they might accept with a mental reservation that they would do their best to evade them. We have to consider that in the case of a draw, the German Government would be able to persuade their public that they had been successful in saving their country from invasion; we must remember that the leading people in Germany who are mainly responsible for this war never allowed their countrymen to suspect that their designs were aggressive; the German Government have always officially dissociated themselves from pan-German propaganda. On occasions they have distinctly and publicly repudiated pan-German aims.

*German
Policy*

But in practice their policy, which remained carefully concealed from their countrymen, was dominated by ideas of aggression in order to secure expansion of territory and spheres of influence. Territory was to be secured by the acquisition of additional colonies in the possession of other Powers, and spheres of influence were to be obtained by the policy of commercial penetration, which has been so steadily pursued both in the Near and the Far East. The same people will, in the case of a draw, be able to convince their country that it was due to their invincible army and navy that the integrity of their country was saved, and they will have little difficulty in persuading them that for the future they must rely upon the same weapons. This frame of mind would not readily respond to any invitation on our part seriously to take in hand a reduction of armaments all round. On the contrary, it would be misrepresented as an insidious proposal to weaken the defensive forces of Germany for the purpose of taking it at a disadvantage, and thereby achieving the object which the Allies had in view when they went to war in the summer of 1914. The other alternative which promises more hope for the eventual reduction of armaments presents itself if the Allies are in a position to impose their terms. Even then, the matter will have to be very delicately handled so as to avoid all appearance of interference in what the Germans consider an essentially internal question which every independent State has a right to decide for itself. It is possible, however, that a substantial defeat of Germany may so shake the confidence of the German people in their rulers that

*Disarmament
possible if
Germany
defeated*

they may be induced to listen to the voice of reason and ask themselves whether it is an axiom that the safety of a State is exclusively secure in proportion to the extent of its armaments. It may be possible in those conditions to convince the German people that we do not confuse the military defences of a country with militarism. A German writer has defined militarism as a teaching of the dogma that might alone counts, and that right, which does not depend on might, is not worth consideration. If the Allies can succeed in substituting for this doctrine the principle that brute force is not entitled to override everything, that a country possessing the physical means to impose its will, irrespective of right or wrong, is not entitled to do so, but can promote in its stead the doctrine that no community can exist which is based on physical force alone, one of the main objects for which they went to war will have been achieved. In other words, one of the essential elements towards securing a reduction of armaments will be the conversion of the German people to these views. Another element, of course, but a less effective one, will be the creation of a League of Nations, that will be prepared to use force against any nation that breaks away from the observance of international law. We are under no illusion, however, that such an instrument will become really effective until nations have learnt to subordinate their personal and individual ambitions and dreams for the benefit of the community of nations. We have witnessed such a process in individual States with the development of what we call a civilised condition of things, but this process has been of slow growth, and we shall have to exer-

*League of
Nations*

cise considerable patience in watching and promoting a similar development among the nations of the world. This consideration brings up the question of whether it will be possible to secure the adhesion of the United States of America, a repetition of Canning's attempt to bring in the New World in order to redress the balance of the Old. There are signs in America that the more thinking people there are awakening to the fact that in the modern condition of things America can no longer cling to her position of splendid isolation. If America could be persuaded to associate itself to such a League of Nations, a weight and influence might be secured for its decisions that would materially promote the object for which it had been created.

We propose to confine ourselves to these general considerations, because we hesitate to discuss the question of reduction of armaments in a more detailed or technical fashion. We lack the knowledge, military, naval, and economical, which would enable us to submit recommendations of any value; such a task would be more properly and usefully entrusted to a committee representing the various national interests, acting on the advice of the most competent experts. In touching upon this question, however, we have been mainly guided by the consideration that no complete scheme for the settlement of Europe after the war is acceptable which does not seriously concern itself with this question and does not endeavour to formulate proposals that would secure the main object for which this country, almost subconsciously, went to war—for which it is prepared to pay heavily, and for which it is also prepared to carry on the war to the ultimate end in order to secure the triumph of the principle that right is superior to might."

Dr

They then proceed to discuss what would happen in the event of a stalemate and an inconclusive peace. It is rumoured that in that event Germany would have to be bought out of Belgium by concessions elsewhere. Most of these concessions would be at the expense of Great Britain.

“To sum up, a peace the result of a draw such as we have endeavoured to sketch out in this report would imply that Germany will not have obtained all she wanted when she began the war, but will have obtained such an instalment of her ambitions as will enable her Government to justify themselves to their people for having gone to war in defence of their territory in 1914; in fact, they will have every reason to claim victory and to represent the Allies as having suffered defeat.

Danger in event of stalemate

We have said enough to indicate that whatever concessions will be necessary in the event of a draw will have to be made by this country. Such concessions can only be made by the sacrifice of our colonial possessions. But this would have to form the subject of enquiry and report by a committee on which the Colonial Office would be represented, so as to enable His Majesty's Government to decide what price they could afford to pay for such a peace.”

This remarkable document was prepared and signed by two prominent officials of the Foreign Office. It was circulated to the Cabinet without any covering recommendation or comment from Sir Edward Grey. It was not considered by the Cabinet or by any Cabinet Committee until after the War Cabinet and the Imperial Cabinet were set up in 1917.

When I undertook the formation of a Government early in December, 1916, the War had been raging for nearly two and a half years: each year more destructive, more costly in life and treasure than the last. We were now in the third year and the end was not in sight. The contending nations were bleeding from every artery. It was the blind and insensate fury of a struggle to the death. Germany had thrown out certain signals in 1916 that her rulers were willing to confer with their adversaries, but the tone and substance of their proffers constituted no basis of hope for a successful conference. It was merely a manœuvre designed to propitiate the Pope and other powerful Neutrals, including America. The Asquith Cabinet had therefore decided with complete unanimity that the time had not arrived for discussing peace with the enemy. They left it at that. They made no effort to clarify their own ideas or to enlighten the public as to the aims for the achievement of which this carnage was to continue.

When I became Prime Minister I was strongly of opinion that, whilst not neglecting any legitimate means for prosecuting the War efficiently (and thus calling upon the nation to make greater sacrifices than ever), we should simultaneously devote some time to working out, not in phrases but in concrete terms, the kind of peace for which these sacrifices were to be made. Terrible losses without appreciable results had spread a general sense of disillusionment and war weariness throughout the nation. There was a growing demand that the Allied peoples as well as those dwelling in enemy lands should be told definitely and distinctly what we were fighting for and the terms upon which we were prepared to settle. But no such conditions could be defined and determined

*Outlook in
December,
1916*

without calling into consultation the Dominions and India, who had been such loyal and valuable partners throughout the conflict. I therefore thought it was essential that an Imperial Cabinet should immediately be constituted and convened to exercise control and supervision over the direction of the War and to formulate the terms of peace which the Empire as a whole would regard as a reasonable and equitable settlement to be aimed at. This was the first Imperial Cabinet ever held in the British Empire.

Before the Dominion Premiers and the representatives of India could reach England there were two communications on the subject of Peace which had to be dealt with immediately. One was a German Peace Note which showed that the German Government also realised the importance of convincing their own people at home, as well as neutral nations, that if this horrible and destructive war was being prolonged the responsibility for its continuance lay with their adversaries. The other communication was President Wilson's Peace query addressed to all the belligerents, enquiring the terms upon which the rival Confederations were prepared to terminate the struggle. The Allies thought it imperative to accord an immediate reply to these two important documents. Neutral opinion had been poisoned to an appreciable extent by enemy propaganda which represented our aims as selfish and imperialistic. We could not therefore afford to wait until the arrival of the Empire delegations before formulating and publishing some reply which would at least in outline indicate our policy. The Allied Governments met in London to consider the answer which should be made to the

*My decision
to consult
Dominions*

*Allied reply
to German
and American
Peace Notes*

German Note and to President Wilson's interrogation.) The Allied Conference first dealt with the German Note in brief terms. It reserved an elaboration of our conditions for the answer to President Wilson. In the reply to the German Note the Allies confined themselves to the assertion that:—

“No peace is possible until assurances are given that reparation will be made for the rights and liberties that have been violated; that the principle of nationality and freedom of small States will be recognised: and that some settlement definitely eliminating the causes that have so long menaced the nations, establishes the only effective guarantee for the world safety.”

In substance, that meant restoration, reparation, self-determination, disarmament and some means, other than war, of establishing and enforcing justice amongst the nations in their dealings with each other.

In examining the terms set forth in our reply to President Wilson, it is essential to bear in mind that the Allies were impressed with the supreme importance at this stage of reassuring President Wilson that we stood by the high purpose with which we had entered into the War, and that we had no intention of departing from the unselfish and elevated principles we then laid down as the foundation and incentive of our common endeavour. We knew that the attitude of America towards the belligerents might depend on the replies given by the Allied and Central Governments respectively to his interrogatory. It is equally important to recall

the fact that President Wilson was satisfied with the character of our reply and that soon afterwards he brought America into the War on the Allied side without protest or expression of disappointment with any of the terms of Peace we laid down in our considered answer to his enquiry. It will be found on examination and comparison that our reply to Wilson and the terms subsequently embodied in the Treaties were substantially the same.

For the benefit of those who believe that the Versailles conditions were dictated in the arrogant spirit engendered by a great victory, it will be helpful to give a hasty survey of the military position in the winter of 1916-17, when the Peace Aims of the Allies were considered in detail. So far from framing these terms in the unbridled insolence of a complete triumph, it is essential to recall the fact that when the Allied Governments considered this declaration of War Aims, the War was going badly for the Allied cause. A powerful Government had fallen in Britain because of the almost universal feeling amongst the public that, so far from victory becoming nearer, the prospect of a triumphant termination for the War appeared to be receding. Belgium and Serbia were almost entirely in the hands of the Central Powers. Roumania had been overrun by their armies and its great resources of oil and grain were in their possession. Turkey was not merely holding its own against all our concerted efforts, but had beaten off our attack on the Dardanelles and driven away helter-skelter a powerful army which had for months been seeking to force an entrance to the Marmora. We had been beaten in Mesopotamia, where a British army had surrendered

to the Turks, and we were held on the Suez Canal by a Turkish force. All the immense armies of Russia had been beaten in the field and their brave spirit shattered. Vast tracts of Russia were occupied by the Germans and the Austrians. The Russian soldiers were seething with discontent. The supplies of food for the cities and towns of Russia had completely broken down and the country itself was on the brink of revolution. The repeated attempts made to release the German hold on French territory had all been driven back with a slaughter unequalled in the whole history of battles. The battle of the Somme,* which failed utterly in its purpose, had cost the Allies upwards of 600,000 casualties. At sea, the one great naval battle of the War had just been fought off Jutland between the British and German High fleets. It was a muddled and drawn Trafalgar, where both fleets sailed at full speed from each other's range and each claimed victory as soon as they reached the port of safety. The actual losses in men and ships on our side were heavier than those sustained by the Germans, and all those who read the official reports of this battle issued by our own Admiralty were filled with dismay both here and in America. The revival of the submarine attack on our shipping was increasing the sinkings of our mercantile marine at an alarming rate, and threatening our island with a serious 'food shortage.

*Failing
confidence on
the Home
Front*

Important Ministers who held key positions in the British Cabinet which resigned in December, 1916, were advising their colleagues that we could not carry on the War for many more months. Our principal naval adviser could see no remedy for the submarine attack. Discontent was spreading rapidly in our

workshops. The pacifist movement was growing in the country. Crowded meetings were held in the towns and industrial centres demanding that the War should be brought to an end. At the risk of some repetition it is worth recalling once more the noteworthy fact that at this juncture even distinguished statesmen like Lord Lansdowne, the author of the Entente with France, had come to the conclusion that we could hope for nothing better than a stalemate, and were advising negotiations for an early settlement. Men of high standing and of unchallengeable patriotism were privately urging the Lansdowne appeal upon the Government. Those who turned towards America with some glimmer of hope that aid might come from that quarter were more than ever discouraged by the fact that the Presidential Election, which had just taken place, had ended in a victory for President Wilson who had fought on one issue—that he had kept America out of the War. His rival in the Presidential contest was angling for the German vote, and before and during his campaign President Wilson had carefully refrained from uttering one word of sympathy with our sacrifices, our cause or our aims. Not even on the invasion of Belgium had he penned one word of censure or protest.

These were not conditions where Allied statesmen could feel that they were in a position to dictate ruthless terms to their country's foes. Far from being depressed by any sense of discouragement and discomfiture, the German leaders were recounting with jubilation and with justification the dazzling array of victories won on every front—land, sea and air. They were already provisionally carving out of Russia an extension of the German Empire on the

Baltic and in Poland: in the West they were satisfied with the annexation of the Briey iron mines and a virtual control over Belgium. Overseas, Britain and France were to be let off with the surrender of a colony or two. That was the atmosphere and those the circumstances in which the chief Ministers of Britain, France and Italy met in London on Christmas Day, 1916, to consider the conditions on which they were prepared to advise the nations they represented to bring this devastating conflict to an end. Bearing this in mind, let us now summarise the conclusions come to at this eventful conference, and incorporated in the reply sent by the Allied Powers to President Wilson.

The joint reply of the Allies, which was dated the 10th January, enumerated the following demands as

The Allies' Peace proposals essential conditions of any peace settlement to which they could assent:—
in December,
1916

The restoration of Belgium, of Serbia, and of Montenegro, with the compensation due to them for damage done by the invaders;

The evacuation of the invaded territories of France, Russia and Roumania, with fitting reparation;

The reorganisation of Europe, guaranteed by a stable settlement, based alike upon the principle of nationalities, on the right which all people, whether small or great, have to the enjoyment of full security and free economic development, and also upon territorial and international agreements so framed as to guarantee land and sea frontiers against unjust attacks;

The restitution of provinces or territories formerly torn from the Allies by force or contrary to the wishes of their inhabitants;

The liberation of Italians, Slavs, Roumanians, Czechs, and Slovaks from foreign domination;

The liberation of the non-Turkish peoples who then lay beneath the murderous tyranny of the Ottoman Empire, and the expulsion from Europe of that Empire, which had proved itself so radically alien to Western civilisation;

The implementing of the Czar's proclamation as to the emancipation of Poland;

The rescue of Europe from the brutal encroachments of Prussian militarism.

With this message was sent a covering note which expanded the final point of the peace conditions. It emphasised the fact that a peace which left German military power still dominant in Europe would be no lasting settlement, and that treaties, however precisely drawn, could not maintain peace unless backed by a better order. The peace sought must therefore be based, first, on a clearing away of the international grievances which might lead to war, and secondly on a breaking and discrediting of the military imperialism of the Central Powers. Thirdly, it was necessary "that behind international law and behind all the treaty arrangements for preventing or limiting hostilities some form of international sanction should be devised which would give pause to the hardest aggressor." By this was meant, of course, the establishment of a League of Nations to guarantee world peace by collective action against the threat of disturbance by any aggressor.

This Allied statement, sent to President Wilson on January 10th, 1917, clearly went much farther and in much more detail into the peace aims of the Entente than had any previous pronouncement; but

in main outline it showed the same features as the original Allied demands; liberation and restoration of Belgium and Serbia; return of Alsace-Lorraine to France; reparation for damage done; settlement of territories and sovereignties generally on the basis, not of conquest and the might of the strong hand, but of the self-determination of their population; the overthrow of great military powers and the substitution of a concert of the nations obeying and enforcing international law and justice.

Within four months America had entered the War against the Central Powers without any qualifying declaration which would manifest any difference of opinion as to War aims. If President Wilson regarded some or any of the aims disclosed to him by the Allied Note as being contrary to right or justice, or as creating any misgivings in his mind on these principles, it is incredible that he should not have indicated dissent or doubt before he threw in his lot with the Allies. Not even in a confidential communication did he suggest disapproval or hesitancy. Thereafter President Wilson's utterances ran parallel with those of the Entente Powers as definitions of the objectives of the ultimate victors. This significant fact I shall confirm by reference to the President's subsequent declarations on questions of policy.

It will be observed that the conditions of peace laid down in this momentous document cover all the terms imposed upon Germany, Austria and Turkey by the Peace Treaties except the surrender of the German Colonies, the annexation of non-Italian territory in Austria, the arrangements for control of international rivers and the establishment of the International

*America's
tacit
acceptance*

*Comparison
with ultimate
Peace
settlement*

Labour Office. Nothing at this stage was said of Colonies. No country was prepared to perpetuate the horrors of such a War merely for the sake of wresting the German Colonies from German control. Had Germany and her allies accepted in substance our terms, peace could have been established in the month of January, 1917, instead of November, 1918, without the surrender by Germany of one of her oversea possessions.

When the Dominion Premiers arrived in the early spring an Imperial Cabinet assembled for the first time in the history of the Empire. One of its first tasks was to institute a prolonged examination of the whole peace problem by general discussion of principles, reference of details to Committees representing the whole Empire, and further deliberations by the Imperial Cabinet on the basis of the reports submitted by these Committees. By way of showing the position taken up by the Imperial War Cabinet at this date on the problems of an equitable peace, I will quote one or two paragraphs from the statement I made at the first meeting in March, 1917:—

*Imperial
Cabinet dis-
cussion : my
statement of
Peace aims*

“Let us then consider the things which surely must be essential to any rational, acceptable peace. In the first place the Germans must be driven out of the territories which they have invaded. They must abandon the lands which they have overrun—in France, Belgium, Russia, Serbia, Roumania, Montenegro. The freedom and independence of those countries must be restored, and Poland must not be merely restored, but restored under conditions which will give freedom

to its oppressed population, and the events of the last few days in Russia have brought that possibility nearer to realisation than it ever was before.¹ Compensation must be demanded for the damage done to these ravaged countries. It is undoubtedly desirable that there should also be such a geographical adjustment of the map of Europe, on the basis of recognising national rights, as will prevent trouble in future, secure a more permanent peace, and also make firmer and more solid the foundations of democratic freedom in Europe.

That surely is the very least which we ought to achieve in a peace. But if we only accomplished so much, we should have failed in some of the main purposes to which we have set ourselves in this terrible struggle. There are at least four or five other essential aims to be striven for, and the first is this: the conviction must be planted in the minds of the civilised world—a conviction that will ripen into an instinct—that all wars of aggression are impossible enterprises; that they accomplish nothing but the destruction of the aggressor. Men must in future be taught to shun war as every civilised being shuns a murder; not merely because it is wrong in itself, but because it leads to inevitable punishment. That is the only sure foundation for any league of peace. Unless you drive that conviction into the human mind in every land, the league of peace will be built on a foundation of sand; and therefore the first thing to accomplish in this War is to make every country feel that in future, if it attempts to repeat the outrage perpetrated by Germany upon civilisation, it will inevitably encounter dire

¹ I was alluding to the Russian Revolution which had just occurred.

and destructive punishment. That, I think, is essential to the peace of the world."

The second aim that I hoped would be attained by this War was "the democratisation of Europe." I urged that "Liberty is the only sure guarantee of peace and goodwill amongst the peoples of the world. Free nations are not eager to make war."

Here, as in many other respects, the turn of events has clouded bright hopes. But temporary failure to attain ideals does not detract from their soundness as well as their nobility, or from the hope and certainty of their ultimate realisation. It only reflects on the defects of the human instruments which are responsible for disappointments in execution. When I come to deal with the Treaty of Versailles it will be my duty and pride to point to the clauses that embodied the lofty aspirations which sustained the spirit of great nations through years of anguish and discouragement. If they have not been attained it is not the fault of the Treaty but of the statesmanship that possessed neither the faith nor the courage to stand by all that was highest and best in its provisions.

When, in my statement to the Imperial Cabinet, I subsequently came to deal with the case of the Turk, I claimed that our aim ought to be the disruption of the Turkish Empire:—

"The Turks have been ruling, or rather misruling, the most fertile and the most favoured lands in the world. They have not ruled successfully any of the territories they have conquered,

and I am not sure that they are not the only race in the world of whom that can be said unreservedly. They are ruling lands which were the cradle of civilisation, the seminary of civilisation, the temple of civilisation, and, from the material point of view, lands which at one time were the granary of civilisation; and now those fair lands are a blighted desert. . . . It will be a great achievement to restore these famous territories to the splendour they enjoyed in the past, and to enable them once more to make their contribution to the happiness and prosperity of the world."

I made no allusion to the settlement of the vexed question of the German Colonies. Personally I was not anxious to add any more millions to the number of square miles we already found much difficulty in garrisoning and a still greater difficulty in developing. But I knew the Dominions had with their own forces conquered territories adjacent to their own, and that they were not enamoured of the idea of retaining the Germans as their next-door neighbours in these domains. I therefore left the question of the destination of the German Colonies to the Committees to be set up for a detailed examination of peace terms, and which were purposely unfettered by any instruction or suggestion from the British War Cabinet. The conclusion they came to on this subject was quite unanimous. The South African Republic was utterly opposed to the idea of continuing German proximity and intrigue in South-West Africa. The encouragement given by the Germans in that colony to Beyers and his fellow rebels against the authority of an

Afrikaner Government determined the attitude of Botha and Smuts. As to East Africa, the South African Union considered the presence of a vast territory in East Africa under German control to be a constant menace to Rhodesia and the Dominion and a block to the materialisation of the great Rhodes dream of a Cape to Cairo route. Australia disliked the prospect of Germany with a jumping-off ground so near to the Australian shores in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. New Zealand took the same view about Samoa. I was always doubtful about the wisdom of stripping Germany of all the backward territories she had done much to open out and to equip. I was convinced that if Germany were prepared to come to reasonable terms at that stage of the War on the major issues on which the War was being fought, neither Britain nor the Dominions would have insisted on continuing the struggle merely in order to annex colonies they had conquered. We were naturally convinced that as between British and German rule the natives would have preferred the former with its less rigid and more indulgent traditions. The natives were entitled to the foremost consideration in the determination of this issue. Their rights were considered when the Peace Treaty was framed by vesting the legal title to these German possessions in the League of Nations with such safeguards for native rights as were guaranteed by its supreme authority.

The Committee set up to consider the question of a League of Nations accepted the principle not only without demur but with sincerity. Most members of the Committee embraced the project with a genuine enthusiasm. Some of them were, however, very doubtful

*League
of Nations
approved*

of the wisdom at this stage of establishing a supreme International Assembly with a rigid Constitution claiming authority for its decisions over the independent nations of the world. The recommendation arrived at on this point I have already given in my "War Memoirs," but in view of its bearing on the actual terms of the Covenant and of the difficulties which have arisen and which partly account for the failure of the League to solve its most troublesome problems, it is worth quoting it textually in this narrative:—

"The Committee were deeply impressed with the danger of the complete destruction of civilised society which threatens the world if the recurrence of a war like the present cannot be prevented, and with the necessity of devising means which would tend, at any rate, to diminish the risk of such a calamity. They felt, however, that any too comprehensive or ambitious project to ensure world peace might prove not only impracticable, but harmful. The proposal which seems to promise the best results proceeds along the path of consultation and conference for composing differences which cannot otherwise be adjusted. The Treaty of Peace should provide that none of the parties who are signatories to that Treaty should resort to arms against one another without previous submission of their dispute to a Conference of the Powers. The Committee think that the details of such a scheme should be discussed with our Allies and especially with the United States of America, before the conclusion of the War."

The conclusions reached by the Imperial Cabinet in 1917 substantially represent the position taken in
Er

*Imperial
Unity on
Peace
aims* 1919 by the Empire as a whole on the question of the aims and objectives of a just peace settlement. And it is important to recall once more the fact that the decisions were arrived at when the military prospect was doubtful and even dark. When the Imperial Cabinet was in session over Peace terms the submarine losses were at their peak, the Allied strength in Eastern Europe was crumbling under the disintegrating operation of revolutionary dissolvents and the Nivelle offensive in France ended in a sanguinary failure which drove the French troops into a serious mutiny. There was nothing to excite the arrogance of triumph in these depressing events.

*Popular
uneasiness
in winter
of 1917* During the winter of 1917 the War Cabinet deemed it desirable to restate Allied War Aims in order to satisfy public opinion in the country and to refute statements which were being circulated not only by extreme pacifists, but by factionists who for one reason or another had a quarrel with the Government, that Germany was prepared to make peace on reasonable terms while bloodthirsty and ambitious Governments in Britain and France stood in the way of a termination of this horrible struggle. The constant and insidious circulation of these statements in the workshops was affecting the minds of the industrial population and interfering seriously with the output of essential war material and equipment. It was also clogging the machinery of recruitment for the forces in the field. The determination of the Russian workers and peasants to make Peace on the basis of "no annexation and no indemnities" was also having its effect on public opinion amongst a considerable section of the industrial

population in Britain and France. The Russian leaders were not concerned with redeeming subject races beyond their own frontiers. They were so absorbed in the urgent necessity for establishing peace with Germany and Austria in order to inaugurate in Russia the social experiments to which they had devoted their lives, that they were prepared to pay any price for its attainment. The attitude of the Workers' Government in Russia was having a very disturbing effect on the artisans in our workshops.

Russian influence

It was therefore deemed desirable to make a full, carefully prepared and authentic statement of Allied War Aims so as to reassure the public, and at the same time to enable the Government to ascertain definitely whether the nation was behind them in the prosecution of the War until those aims were achieved. We were fully conscious of the fact that the impending campaign would be the costliest and the most risky upon which the Allies had yet entered. American preparations for taking an active part in the struggle were lumbering slowly and rather clumsily along. America had not yet put more than a single division into the battle line. There seemed no prospect that she could send many trained divisions to our aid when the impending German attack fell on the Allies in the spring. Our reserves of man power in Britain and France were approaching exhaustion. Unless the nation was united in purpose and spirit, the Government would not be justified in prolonging the conflict. With a timid and hesitant people failure was inevitable. Russia, with her immense army of brave men, was so completely out of the War as an effective combatant that Germany was able to withdraw all her best troops from that battle-front

and for the first time since 1914 to establish an equality in numbers in the western theatre. The principal Allied army—the French—was only slowly and dubiously recovering from a serious mutiny in its ranks which had shaken its fine morale through and through. In the opinion of General Haig, expressed to the Cabinet only a few weeks before our January declaration of peace terms, the grand army of France—the heroes of a hundred desperate battles—could not be depended upon any longer for any sustained or major operation. I am not expressing any view as to the soundness of General Haig's estimate of the fighting value of the French troops at that crucial moment. I am only recording the fact that it had just been given to the Cabinet in writing before we sat down to frame our peace terms.

The British Army was sore, disillusioned, if not disheartened after the failure of the Flanders folly in which it never believed. It had lost hundreds of thousands of its picked officers and men in that enterprise. Italy had by no means recovered from the shattering disaster of Caporetto. Its army was in course of being re-formed, reconstituted and re-equipped. In the sequel of events it took no further effective part in the desperate decisive fighting of 1918 until the very end, when the Austrian Army was disintegrating.

In these discouraging conditions a decisive battle was impending between a united army invigorated by victory on all land fronts—the Russian, Italian, and French fronts—and a divided army, depressed by a long series of futile operations ending in colossal losses. The Allied leaders who were in control of the war direction were convinced that

the Central Powers, in spite of all these advantages, would be beaten in the end, provided the Allied nations remained united and resolute, and provided also that Allied resources were wisely and effectively handled—a proviso which contained many elements of doubt. But when they indited the only terms of peace which they were prepared to accept, they could not do so with the confidence of men who had the enemy in the hollow of their hands, and who were only waiting for the crushing victory which was to place them in a position to dictate terms to a vanquished and helpless adversary.

To test the feeling of the nation, I decided that it was essential to publish a considered and challenging pronouncement of our War aims. I took unusual measures to ensure that the pronouncement should have a national character and that it should represent every section of opinion. I gave it out in the form of an address to a meeting of the Trade Union delegates on January 5th, 1918. The full text is given in Volume V of my "War Memoirs". Every word of the declaration had been considered beforehand by the Cabinet. It received the previous assent of the Liberal leaders to whom also I had submitted it. No Trade Union or Labour leader or delegate questioned the equity or wisdom of any of the demands put forward by me on behalf of the Government. President Wilson and the French Foreign Secretary subsequently notified their approval. I shall not repeat here the category of the claims which the British Government then regarded as essential to a just peace. Although this pronouncement was the most comprehensive and detailed statement made up to that date by any Government, it was simply

*My statement
of Peace
aims in
January 1918*

an elucidation of aims already put forward in previous declarations by Allied statesmen. All these War aims were incorporated in the Peace Treaties signed in 1919. What is more to the point is the unchallengeable fact that these Treaties did not go beyond the stipulations laid down in the January declaration.

Two days after my address to the Trade Unions, President Wilson gave utterance to his famous Fourteen Points. Although they are well known, the narrative of the developments that led to Versailles will not be complete without setting them forth categorically:—

*President
Wilson's
Fourteen
Points*

“I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

V. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal

weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest co-operation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognisable lines of nationality.

X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

XI. Roumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political

independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike."

With the exception of the Freedom of the Seas, there is nothing in these points which is incompatible with the War aims already proclaimed *Their agreement with Allies' Peace Aims* by British and French Governments: the evacuation of all territories invaded and occupied by the Germans and the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, the liberation of all nationalities in the German, Austrian and Turkish Empire kept in subjection by force, the establishment of a League of Nations, the reduction of armaments, reparations for damage done. The words "restoration of the invaded regions" were somewhat ambiguous. But they were understood to refer not only to the cost of restoring the invaded territories to the condition in which the Germans found them at the date of the invasion, but to compensation for damage inflicted on the civilian population. So that there should be no doubt left on this point before the Armistice, President Wilson was pressed by Britain, France and Italy for an explanation of this particular phrase. He instructed his Secretary of State, Mr. Lansing, to reply on November 5th, 1918:—

"When the President formulated his peace conditions in his address to Congress on January 8, last, he declared that the invaded territories must be not only evacuated and liberated, but restored. The Allies think that no doubt should be left as to what this stipulation means. They understand by it that compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of

Germany by land, by sea and from the air. The President is in agreement with this interpretation."

This note, which was known as the "Lansing Note," was communicated to the Germans before they signed the Armistice.

Point V, which stipulates for the "Impartial adjustment of colonial claims" is vague and capable of a variety of interpretations. But it must be recollected that I had already stated fully the British view on this subject three days before the President delivered his historic speech and that, so far from entering any protest or reservation, he had prefaced his own statement of aims by expressing approval of the moderation of my declaration. It will be found, when we come to the actual disposition of the German Colonies by the Treaty, that there was no difference of opinion between him and his British and French colleagues at the Conference as to the restoration of these Colonies to their German owners and no irreconcilable difference as to their disposal.

The phrase about Freedom of the Seas led to some misunderstanding and a threatened rupture between the United States and the Allies when negotiations for an armistice were opened up by the German Government with President Wilson. The Germans were prepared to make peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points.

The Allied Governments were firmly of opinion that the terms of the Armistice should be settled at a Conference representative of all the Allied and Associated Powers. Such a Conference was held at the Quai d'Orsay in Paris on the 29th of October, 1918.

The discussion is very illuminating for the light it casts on the controversies which have surrounded the Paris Peace Conference. It shows that the Allies had no intention in the hour of complete triumph to exact any fresh and harsher conditions from the vanquished because of the completeness of their victory, but that they were determined to stand by the terms which they had settled and published when the balances of fate had given no clear indication of the side on which they would finally settle down. Here is an extract from a record taken at the time of the course of the discussion as to the terms upon which an Armistice could be granted to the Germans:—

“MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that there were two closely connected questions which had to be considered. First, there were the actual terms of an armistice. With this, however, was closely related the question of terms of peace. If the Notes which had passed between President Wilson and Germany were closely studied, it would be found that an armistice was proposed on the assumption that the peace would be based on the terms set forth in President Wilson’s speeches. The Germans had actually demanded an armistice on this assumption. Consequently, if the Allies agreed to an armistice, unless something definite was said to the contrary, they would be committed to President Wilson’s peace terms. Hence, the first thing to consider appeared to be whether these terms were acceptable.

M. PICHON (the French Foreign Minister) read the actual note handed to the representatives of the British, French and Italian Governments by Mr. Lansing at Washington.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked Colonel House whether his interpretation of the situation was correct, namely, that the German Government were counting on peace being concluded on the basis of President Wilson's fourteen points and his other speeches.

COLONEL HOUSE said this was undoubtedly the case.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that unless the Allies made the contrary clear they themselves, in accepting the armistice, would be bound by these terms. Consequently, before they agreed to an armistice, they must make it clear what their attitude towards these terms was.

M. CLEMENCEAU asked whether the British Government had ever been consulted about President Wilson's terms? France had not been. If he had never been consulted, he did not see how he could be committed. He asked if the British Government considered themselves as committed?

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that this was not the case now. But if he accepted an armistice without saying anything to the contrary, he would undoubtedly regard the British Government as committed to the terms.

M. PICHON said that the only question now put to us was the terms on which we would enter an armistice without prejudice to peace terms.

MR. BALFOUR said that, for the moment, unquestionably we were not bound by President Wilson's terms, but if we assented to an armistice without making our position clear, we should certainly be bound.

M. CLEMENCEAU agreed that this was the case, and asked that the fourteen points might be produced."

M. Pichon proceeded to read the Fourteen Points to the Conference. The only two clauses in them upon which any question was raised were the Freedom of the Seas and Reparations. As to the former (Point II), speaking on behalf of the British Government, I declared that I could not accept this clause. Had it been in operation during the War, we should have lost the power of imposing a blockade. Germany had broken down almost as much from the effects of the blockade as from that of the military operations. She was short of foodstuffs, copper, rubber, tungsten, wool, cotton, leather and many other essential materials. When Holland had been pouring foodstuffs into Germany and Scandinavia had been doing the same, we had been obliged to put a stop to it. So far as Clause II was concerned, therefore, I would like to see the League of Nations thoroughly established and proved before this issue was determined and even before any discussion took place.

*The right
of
blockade*

“COLONEL HOUSE said that the discussions were leading to this, that all the negotiations up to this point with Germany and Austria would have to be cleaned off the slate. The President would have no alternative but to tell the enemy that his conditions were not accepted by his Allies. The question would then arise whether America would not have to take up these questions direct with Germany and Austria.

M. CLEMENCEAU asked if Colonel House meant to imply that there would be a separate peace between the United States of America and the enemy.

COLONEL HOUSE said it might lead to this. It would depend upon whether America could or

could not agree to the conditions put up by France, Great Britain and Italy.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that, so far as item II was concerned, it was impossible for the British Government to agree. If the United States of America were to make a separate peace, we should deeply regret it, but, nevertheless, should be prepared to go on fighting. (M. Clemenceau here interjected: 'Yes.') We could not give up the one power which had enabled the American troops to be brought to Europe. This we were prepared to fight through and could not give up. Great Britain was not really a military nation. Its main defence was its Fleet. To give up the right of using its Fleet was a thing which no one in England would consent to. Moreover, our seapower had never been exercised harshly. He thought there was no serious complaint to be made by neutrals against the British, French, or Italian Fleets, or the American Fleet which was now engaged in close concert with them."

I then asked what the word "restoration" in the Fourteen Points implied, especially in respect of personal injuries. I gave as an illustration the loss sustained by the wives and children of the sailors drowned at sea. In the subsequent discussion this was extended to all who had been killed or maimed in the War.

*Need to
include
reparations*

"MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that apart from this, he had no objection to the President's fourteen points. He suggested, therefore, that a reply should be sent to President Wilson, in the sense that the

fourteen points must include reparation; that we believed reparation was included in the President's speeches; but that we wished to be perfectly clear about it. As regards freedom of the seas, we could not accept the interpretation which we understood Germany to put on it.

COLONEL HOUSE suggested the best plan was for the British, French, and Italian Governments to get together and make their exceptions to President Wilson's terms. This seemed to him to be the first step. Unless they did so it was no good laying down the terms of an armistice.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE expressed agreement. . . . He pointed out that if we did not make any declaration on the subject, and we agreed to enter a conference, we should be committed to the doctrine of the freedom of the seas without definition of its scope.

M. CLEMENCEAU said he could not understand the meaning of the doctrine. War would not be war if there was freedom of the seas.

MR. BALFOUR said that at any rate we must give Germany some warning beforehand that some points were outside the armistice."

When Baron Sonnino raised the question of the inadequacy of the reference to Italian claims in the Fourteen Points, Colonel House gave a significant reply which has a much wider application. He made it clear that the President's Peace terms were not confined to the Fourteen Points, but that the subsequent speeches he delivered on the subject must be incorporated in the conditions of the Armistice.

*America not
limited by the
Fourteen
Points*

"COLONEL HOUSE said that the President's conditions were couched in very broad terms. In the case of Alsace-Lorraine, for example, he did not say specifically that it should go back to France, but he intended it positively.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that the Germans certainly did not place that interpretation on it.

COLONEL HOUSE said that the President had said so much on other occasions. He had insisted on Germany's accepting all his speeches, and from these you could establish almost any point that anyone wished against Germany. Reparation for Belgium and France, which had been alluded to, was certainly implied in clauses 7 and 8, where it had been stated that these invaded countries must be evacuated and 'restored.' The same principle applied to illegal sinkings at sea and to the sinking of neutrals."

As the War went on President Wilson had come more and more into contact with realities, and each speech he delivered became more and more an elucidation of principles he had laid down in other speeches in the light of the grim facts which he now encountered for the first time in his dealings with the nations of the world. He then realised that the conditions of peace after a war which had so rent and torn the nations must be such as would give a sense of security for the future to countries which had suffered grievously at the hands of one of the most redoubtable and relentless military confederacies that had ever menaced the peace and liberty of mankind.

When we came to discuss the attitude of President Wilson on Reparations and the full meaning

*Agreement
on
Reparations* of his somewhat cryptic allusion to this subject in the eighth of his Fourteen Points, no real difficulty arose. Colonel House was prepared to accept the Allied interpretation of that phrase. The note received from Mr. Lansing on this subject during the course of the discussion, which I have already quoted, set at rest all our doubts on this point. The Wilson declarations covered compensation for all personal injuries sustained through enemy action. This satisfied the Allies, who had no intention of putting forward any demand which would include the costs of the War.

But as to the Freedom of the Seas, there still remained two antagonistic and apparently irreconcilable points of view. Mr. Balfour and I, for the reasons I have given, were quite resolved that we could not give in on the right of naval blockade, even if the War had to be prosecuted to the end without any further help from President Wilson. M. Clemenceau concurred. Colonel House appeared to have received instructions which were equally definite on the other side.

When, in negotiation with strong men, a point is reached where you have made up your mind that you cannot give in, I have always found it better to make this clear before the other side take up a position from which they cannot recede without public humiliation. President Wilson no doubt felt strongly about the interference by belligerents with neutral shipping. His experiences during the first two and a half years of the War had burnt into his consciousness a resentment, natural in the leader of a people with whom independence is the fount and origin of their national existence, against the notion of any foreign country stopping and overhauling on the high seas ships

sailing under their flag, of which they are justifiably so proud. But during the year and a half in which he had participated in the War he had co-operated in the infliction of similar indignities on vessels sailing under other flags. What then did he mean by Freedom of the Seas? Did he mean to abolish all measures for effecting blockade of an enemy country? He had not committed himself to any definition of what he meant by the contentious phrase. It remained to find an interpretation which would provide an outlet consistent with his self-respect and our safety. The Conference of October 29th adjourned without coming to any conclusion in order to afford opportunity for informal conversations between Colonel House and the British representatives.

House communicated that evening with President Wilson, informing him fully of the tense differences which had arisen at the Conference. *Wilson obdurate about Freedom of the Seas* Wilson's first reaction to this communication was obduracy. On Reparation he experienced no difficulty in falling in with Allied ideas. But in spite of the recent record of his own Navy, he would not give in on Freedom of the Seas, and he resorted to a threat which he tried with very indifferent results many times later on "to make the decision public"—that is, he would appeal to the public opinion of the countries represented by Clemenceau, Orlando and myself. There was no man who was in a less favourable position to take that step, for whereas British, French and Italian opinion showed itself to be overwhelmingly behind their representatives, America, in a very short time, practically repudiated its President. I need hardly say this unloaded blunderbuss did not intimidate either Clemenceau or the British leaders. The dangers

of public sentiment in our respective countries came from exactly the opposite direction. We could not accept an interpretation of the Freedom of the Seas which would deprive Britain, who had no great army, of the only effective weapon in her armoury when challenged to the arbitrament of war. With Freedom of the Seas in the original Wilsonian meaning of the term, the Central Powers might have defied all the armies of the Alliance. The effectiveness of the Blockade saved the Allies years of slaughter. Colonel House was wise enough to feel that there was nothing to be gained by a propagandist campaign engineered from America to rouse public resentment

*Col. House
sees reason*

in Britain against a well rooted conviction that the security of her island home was dependent on both the defensive and the strangling power of the fleet in any conflict that might be provoked. Gradually President Wilson was made to realise that he was up against a tradition that could not be overthrown by the blast of a single speech delivered from across the Atlantic. Matters were eased by the interpretation which Colonel House ultimately placed upon the term "Freedom of the Seas." He insisted that "it did not mean the abolition of the principle of blockade"; for him it signified merely "that codification of maritime usage that would sanctify the doctrine of the immunity of private property at sea in time of war." This statement was not made at our first discussion on the subject. Colonel House was then inexorable in his adhesion to the full and unqualified Wilsonian doctrine. However, the conversations between us after the meeting improved matters and ended in an agreed declaration which was sent on November 4th to President Wilson, and which he practically

accepted and communicated to the Germans before they signed the Armistice terms.

The agreed answer of the President to the Germans also placed on record House's and Lansing's assurance that the word "restoration" in the Fourteen Points meant compensation by Germany for all damage done to the Allied population as well as to their property.

The terms as conveyed to the Germans were as follows:—

Armistice stipulations of the Allies "The Allied Governments have given careful consideration to the correspondence which has passed between the President of the United States and the German Government. Subject to the qualifications which follow they declare their willingness to make peace with the Government of Germany on the terms of peace laid down in the President's Address to Congress of the 8th January, 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses. They must point out, however, that clause 2, relating to what is usually described as the Freedom of the Seas, is open to various interpretations, some of which they could not accept. They must therefore reserve to themselves complete freedom on this subject when they enter the Peace Conference.

Further, in the conditions of peace laid down in his Address to Congress of the 8th January, 1918, the President declared that invaded territories must be restored as well as evacuated and freed. The Allied Governments feel that no doubt ought to be allowed to exist as to what this provision implies. By it they understand that compensation will be

made by Germany for all damage caused to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the *aggression of Germany* by land, by sea, and from the air."

As regards the Freedom of the Seas, the above declaration enabled the President to say that he had not given way, but had only postponed the settlement of the subject to the Peace Conference. I felt convinced that nothing more would be heard of the subject. My confidence was justified, for the topic was never alluded to in any of our discussions in Paris when we were framing the Treaty. On further examination of the President's various declarations it was found that there was no essential difference between the conditions he laid down for a just and honourable peace and those which had already been promulgated by the Allies. Apparent differences on the Freedom of the Seas and Reparations were thus reconciled before the Armistice was signed.

The impression left on my mind that President Wilson decided not to press the threatened point at our subsequent proceedings is confirmed by a statement made by M. Clemenceau in a speech defending the Treaty of Versailles delivered by him in September, 1919. Referring to the controversy which had arisen over the Freedom of the Seas, he said:—

*Clemenceau's
evidence on
Wilson's
acceptance of
Allied View*

"Mr. Lloyd George said to me: 'Do you admit that without the British Fleet you could not have continued the War?' And I answered: 'Yes.' Mr. Lloyd George then added: 'Are you disposed to prevent us, in case of war, doing the same thing

again?' And I answered: 'No.' Well, now, I repeated this conversation to President Wilson. It did not in the least disturb him. President Wilson answered me: 'I have nothing to ask you which could displease or embarrass either of you.'"*

An attempt has been made to create the impression that President Wilson experienced great difficulties in his endeavour to secure the adhesion of the principal Allied Powers to his Fourteen Points. Even Colonel House, who knew better what actually happened than outside critics, sought to foster that false impression. The objections to the Fourteen Points were confined to the matters I have indicated. They were confined exclusively to a question of interpretation of two out of the fourteen points. The explanations given to the Allies by or on behalf of President Wilson of what he intended to stipulate in these two points were accepted in an unqualified manner by the Allied leaders. It turned out that when fully explained, the views of Wilson, Clemenceau, Orlando and myself on the dubious points were in essence identical. The nations we represented were surely entitled to ask for these explanations before we committed ourselves on matters of such concern to our respective countries. The sacrifices that made victory possible had been borne mainly by the European Allies. France had lost of her sons 1,364,000 dead and 3,740,000 wounded. Of the millions of young men under thirty who went into the line to defend the soil and honour of France, only 50 per cent. ever returned from the

*General
acceptance
by Allies of
the Fourteen
Points*

*'Allied
war
sacrifices*

* André Tardieu: "The Truth about the Treaty," p. 106.

battlefield. The War also cost France the equivalent of £8,000,000,000; 4,022 of her villages had been destroyed; 20,000 of her factories ruined and millions of acres of her fertile land rendered uncultivable without complete reconditioning. France has a population which is one-third of that of the United States of America, whose dead numbered 60,000, and not one of whose villages had a single shack destroyed by enemy action. The British Empire had 900,000 of its young men killed and over 2,000,000 wounded, 8,000,000 tons of her shipping were sunk by enemy action. The War cost her directly £10,000,000,000. Italy sacrificed 2,000,000 of her youth in killed and wounded, and although a comparatively poor country, the War cost her seventy milliards of francs. Surely these sacrifices entitled these three countries to know to what kind of peace they were being committed by an associate that had made a truly notable contribution to victory, but whose sacrifices were not comparable to those made by the European States. We were entitled to ask a few questions about the meaning of two staccato phrases in a speech of President Wilson's which was to be made the basis of a peace settlement vitally affecting the future of the peoples who had trusted to us their fortunes. We did not mean to go back on any offer we made to Germany. Hence our insistence on clearing up obscurities before accepting her surrender. The main principles laid down by President Wilson were accepted without demur; and to taunt friends and colleagues with reluctance to accept the President's doctrines because they asked that two points which were vaguely expressed should be cleared up, is neither generous nor fair.

There are many explanations—mostly sinister and

derogatory—offered of the indubitable fact that the peccant Four who were responsible for the Treaty of Versailles worked in friendly harmony and in the end reached unanimous conclusions. Those who view the Treaty as a cauldron of hatred, revenge and rapacity, but find it difficult to know where to place President Wilson on that assumption, picture him as the poor dupe of a couple of expert political gunmen who alternately bullied and cajoled, hoodwinked and flattered him until the poor man ultimately signed on the dotted line. Those who still consider that the Treaty was not a stern enough sentence on the culprits, having regard to the magnitude of their crime, and think we were lured into slosh by the apostle of idealist experimentation, adopt exactly the opposite point of view, and depict Clemenceau and myself as the converts of an American revivalist. Clemenceau was not the material out of which penitent forms are made. A perusal of the various declarations made by French, British and Italian statesmen long before the War had reached its climax, demonstrates beyond challenge that the European Allies who had borne the brunt of the struggle were in complete accord as to the main terms of the settlement; and a careful study of the Wilson war aims will also show that, as far as the determining principles of the Treaty are concerned, he also was in full agreement with his European colleagues. The two questions upon which any doubt remained as to his real views were cleared up during the Armistice discussions, before Wilson had been in contact with Europe and its antiquated and battle-scarred notions about what is right and wrong in international relations.

*Fantastic
myths about
the Big
Four*

*All main
features of
Peace agreed
before the
Armistice*

The Armistice was an intimation to friend and foe alike that the settlement which followed the War would be drawn up on lines with which the world had been familiarised by the repeated declarations of the men who spoke authoritatively on behalf of the victors. A Peace Conference would necessarily take time to define boundaries, but the principles upon which the map of Europe was to be redrawn had been repeatedly laid down by the Allies and were not departed from. The amount of the reparations demanded, the machinery by which they were to be fixed and the methods by which payment was to be exacted and security established would require prolonged discussion, but the demand for damages in respect of destruction wrongfully inflicted upon persons and property had been proclaimed by all the victorious nations. The same thing applies to the other conditions of the settlement. The notion that President Wilson came to Europe a lonely crusader, to enforce his ideas about an Association of Nations upon hostile Governments is a myth, and a foolish one at that. In the chapter on the League of Nations I propose to demonstrate, from quotations taken from contemporary documents, that the British and French Governments had not only committed themselves to the project before President Wilson ever entered the War, but that they had announced their intention of making it an integral part of the peace settlement and had actually set up expert committees to work out a practicable plan long before the President had given any time or thought to the subject in detail. One of these plans in substance constitutes the Covenant of the League to-day.

All the cheap stuff written by sensational economists about "the morass of Paris," "arid

Sensational charges unwarranted intrigues," "spoliation," "Carthaginian peace," is at best belated. These after-the-event critics ought to have made their protest when the Allied Governments repeatedly announced these terms during the War. Their criticisms would then have been timely and courageous. We went to Paris committed several times over to these terms, and on their strength secured the support and sacrifices of the nation which alone enabled us to struggle through to a complete victory. To depart from those pledges when the sacrifice and suffering had been consummated would have been a betrayal. We certainly would not have been entitled to do so in order to propitiate men who during the War did their best to discourage the efforts which averted defeat and ensured triumph. Those who led the attack on the Treaty of Versailles were the same futile and fainthearted "experts" who sought in 1916 to scare us into retreat by predicting that we could not keep fighting for more than a few months.

When we come to the position of Austria-Hungary, the Peace Treaty went beyond the original intentions of the great Allied Powers. The tearing up of the Austrian Empire into disparate and unconnected fragments was no part of the policy of France, Russia, Britain, America or Italy. We knew there must be a readjustment of frontiers in favour of Italy, Serbia and Roumania. As for the rest of the Austrian Empire, the idea that found favour was that which was expounded by General Smuts in his interview with Count Mensdorff (see "War Memoirs," Volume V): the conferring of complete autonomy on the component races who made up the Austro-Hungarian

Unforeseen débâcle of Austria-Hungary

Empire, inside a federal constitution. Had that been found practicable there can be no doubt that it would have conduced to peace and stability in Central Europe. But when the Austrian Army collapsed, the fissiparous elements took charge of the situation. Czechoslovakia proclaimed its independence, and the Slavonic population of the South joined up with the Serbian kingdom. Hungary declared its independence and Austria became an isolated Republic. The Roumans of Transylvania had already joined their fellow-countrymen. Ere the Powers came to consider the Austrian Peace they were confronted with accomplished and unreversible facts. I predicted at the beginning of the War that it would end in a break-up of "the ramshackle Empire." The prediction was verified with startling suddenness and the most irreparable completeness. There was not an area in the whole Austrian Empire which had not been parcelled out amongst the various claimants and occupied by their troops before the Powers ever met in conference to consider the terms of the Treaty of Peace with Austria. The task of the Parisian Treaty-makers was not to decide what in fairness should be given to the liberated nationalities, but what in common honesty should be freed from their clutches when they had overstepped the bounds of self-determination.

CHAPTER II

PREPARATIONS FOR THE TREATY: INTERALLIED CONFERENCES

M. TARDIEU, in his very able book, "The Truth about the Treaty," seeks to dispel charges brought by French critics against the provisions of the Versailles Treaty on the ground of its undue leniency to Germany. When the draft of the Treaty was first published, all the serious criticism in the French Chamber and by French journalists was of that character. M. Clemenceau was accused of letting Germany off too lightly at the expense of French interests. As far as the majority of the British House of Commons and a powerful section of the British Press were concerned, the same observation applies. Such adverse comment as appeared during the course of the Peace Congress was all in the same direction. There was not an audible voice raised in Britain during the progress of the Conference in Paris urging a modification of the terms exacted by the Treaty from the vanquished. I was indeed at that time accused of breaking faith with the British electors by letting off Germany too lightly. The attack on the severity of the Treaty appeared at a later stage. It was only a long time after the appearance of the terms that allegations were made against the British negotiators that they were rushed at the General Election of December, 1918, into giving extravagant and foolish pledges from which they

*Treaty
attacked as
too lenient*

could not extricate themselves during the negotiations. The harsher provisions of the Treaty were attributed to the exigencies of the hustings.

The best answer to this charge is to be found, firstly, in my narrative of the declarations made during the War, with the full assent of every organised section of opinion, and secondly, in the official record, which I now propose to summarise, of the proceedings of Imperial Cabinet meetings, summoned immediately after the Armistice to consider the terms of the Peace, and of the transactions of the Interallied Conference, which met in London three weeks after the Armistice for the same purpose. At these gatherings—imposing conclaves of the principal statesmen of the Allies and of the British Empire—the most vital issues and, as far as British opinion is concerned, all the most controverted issues, were debated and dealt with exhaustively. The main lines of the Peace had, as I have already pointed out, been determined by the Allies when neither a victory nor an election was in sight. The deliberations of the Cabinet either immediately before or after the Armistice introduced no fresh conditions to be imposed upon the enemy except one: the demand for punishment of those who were responsible for the War or for atrocious offences against the laws of War. The assurance of victory effected no other change in the terms of peace. The Treaty itself conforms in essentials to the decisions of the Imperial Cabinet before victory was visible on the horizon, and these decisions were not altered when the triumphant goal was reached. These facts constitute an irrefutable answer to the suggestion that the British Government, prompted by electioneering

*Punishment of
war crimes
only post-war
addition to
terms*

motives, was responsible for stiffening the demands of the Allies.

Let us first review the meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet. This body had already played a very considerable part in the direction of the War, and afterwards in the shaping of the terms of peace. Between March 20th, 1917, when it first met, and the 31st December, 1918, it held altogether 48 meetings. In addition to these full meetings, Dominion representatives were placed on practically every important Committee, and discharged important functions in helping the War Cabinet to investigate special subjects. I refer in Chapter I to the discussions on the terms of peace which occurred during the progress of the War at the Imperial Cabinet, and I have given a full account of them in my War Memoirs. After the Armistice the Imperial War Cabinet was immediately called together to deliberate on the proposals for peace which should be submitted on behalf of the British Empire at the forthcoming conversations with Allied statesmen, and more particularly with President Wilson on his arrival in Europe.

It would occupy too much space even to summarise adequately the whole of the discussions that ensued during these weeks. It is important, however, that an indication should be given of the opinions expressed on the most vital questions that were raised, and more particularly on the more controverted issues, where misrepresentation is rife.

I. THE TRIAL OF THE KAISER

There has been so much foolish gibing on this proposal that it is necessary for me to state

Clemenceau and Curzon raise proposal to try Kaiser and document all the evidence. It was dealt with at the first meeting of the Imperial Cabinet held after the Armistice on November 20th, 1918. After a general discussion upon a variety of topics, Lord Curzon raised the specific issue of the trial of the Kaiser. This is the first occasion upon which any allusion had been made to this matter at any Ministerial consultations, and in view of the personal responsibility which has been attached to me for this proposal and the electioneering motive imputed to me as the instigation of my action, I must call attention to the fact that the subject was first introduced by Lord Curzon and that he definitely states that he was doing so as a result of a conversation in Paris with M. Clemenceau at which I was not present. I am not desirous of disclaiming my full share of responsibility in the matter. But in view of the reiterated sneers as to the origin and authorship of the idea which are constantly repeated in political speeches and articles of the cheaper and more repetitive kind, it is necessary that I should quote textually the statements made by those who inaugurated the discussion and first proposed the course of action adopted by the Allies.

Popular demand for punishment of war criminals During the last few months of the War there had been a growing feeling in France—which was the greatest sufferer—and also in Britain and in America, that punishment should be meted out to those who had been guilty of barbarities which exceeded the limits of atrocity held legitimate, because inevitable, in the waging of war under modern conditions. The French population in the occupied areas had suffered from these excesses. British feeling was roused to a pitch

of irrepressible wrath by the cruelties inflicted on unarmed seamen by the sinking of merchant ships on the high seas in all weathers, and the crowding of the crew in frail boats where they would be left to the mercy of the waves in the tempestuous seas of the Eastern Atlantic. The losses through drowning and exposure were appalling. The Kaiser was held to be personally responsible for this cruel infamy. American opinion was also stirred to its depths by this outrage, which in fact had brought America into the war against Germany. There was also a growing feeling that war itself was a crime against humanity, and that it would never be finally eliminated until it was brought into the same category as all other crimes by the infliction of condign punishment on the perpetrators and instigators. The French in their draft Agenda for the Peace Conference placed "Responsibilities for the War" before "Reparation."

*Feeling in
France*

They also informed us that they had collected evidence on the subject of War crimes and had referred the dossier to their experts for examination and report. Lord Curzon had paid a visit to Paris earlier in the month, and had spoken with Clemenceau about the trial of the Kaiser, amongst other matters. Curzon wrote me that Clemenceau

"... thought that as an act of international justice, of world retribution, it would be one of the most imposing events in history and that its conception was well worthy of being pursued."

He prayed me to communicate with my Government on the matter and to let him have all papers or reports on the subject that we might prepare."

Curzon went on:—

“I pray you to consider it seriously. Public opinion will not willingly consent to let this arch-criminal escape by a final act of cowardice. The supreme and colossal nature of his crime seems to call for some supreme and unprecedented condemnation. Execution, imprisonment, these are not, or may not be, necessary. But continued life, an inglorious and ignoble exile, under the weight of such a sentence as has never before been given in the history of mankind, would be a penance worse than death.”

I informed him that it was a matter worthy of consideration by the Imperial Cabinet and that he ought to raise it at the next meeting of that body. This he undertook to do.

This is how Lord Curzon opened the matter to his colleagues in the Imperial War Cabinet:—

“While in Paris last week I had a conversation with M. Clemenceau with regard to what the attitude of the Allied Governments should be towards the ex-Kaiser. I do not think I need argue the case about the desirability, still less the fairness, or the equity of trying him and the Crown Prince. We know the war was started by the Kaiser, and we have reason to believe that all the cruelty, the iniquities, and the horrors that have been perpetrated, if not directly inspired by him, have been countenanced and in no way discouraged by him. *In my view the Kaiser is the arch-Criminal of the world, and just as in any other sphere of life when*

Curzon's
statement to
Imperial
Cabinet

GT

you get hold of a criminal you bring him to justice, so I do not see, because he is an Emperor and living in exile in another country, why he should be saved from the punishment which is his due. When I spoke to M. Clemenceau about the matter he said that, as far as he knew, the French jurists had not looked at it from the point of view of international law and of the questions that will arise in respect of internment and extradition, *but he said public opinion in France, as represented by the press, was strongly in favour of steps being taken for the trial of the Kaiser and that he himself shared that view, although he would be very glad to hear from our Government what our ideas were on the subject.* He then discussed the form which such a tribunal might take; I think he had the idea of an international tribunal, composed not only of delegates from Allied countries which have taken part in the recent war but of neutrals as well. He discussed the two conditions; first, of a successful demand for the person of the Kaiser himself and putting him up for trial before a body to which he himself could answer for his misdeeds; and the other was the question of the trial taking place in the absence of the Kaiser, supposing we were unable to get him from Holland. He did not think that would be a fatal bar. He thought the terms of indictment might be drawn up and that they might be sent to the Kaiser, if we could not get hold of him. *As regards punishment, the idea which he mentioned—I do not think he said much about execution; I do not think that entered into our minds—was that of treating the Kaiser as a universal outlaw so that there should be no land in which he could set his foot. These were the general views that he put forward, and he awaited further*

information from us. There were two other points mentioned. One was that, as we all hoped that a League of Nations would emerge from this war, would it not be really a great act of initiation if the first step that would really call the League of Nations in an effective manner into being, should be an act of justice taken by the world as a whole. I saw the Attorney-General this morning on my way to the Cabinet. You will remember we referred to him some time ago the question of constituting a tribunal for the trial of all those persons who have been guilty of such acts of murder as that of Nurse Cavell and Captain Fryatt. I asked whether his Committee were considering the question of trying the Kaiser? He said they had not approached it yet, but that the majority of the Committee—and it is an effective Committee, as we know—were in favour of that course, and would submit a recommendation to that effect and put before the War Cabinet the scheme of a tribunal by which it might be done. On a point of law, I imagine that any action taken for getting hold of the Kaiser should be taken now; that is to say, it must be taken before the Peace Conference. He would be a prisoner of war now, but if you postponed it till after the Peace Conference you might not get him at all. That seems a reason why we should come to some decision at once. I have not thought it necessary to argue the case on its merits.”

I followed and strongly supported M. Clemenceau's proposal with reservations:—

“I think rulers who plunge the world into all this misery ought to be warned for all time that

*My support
for Clemenceau
policy* they must pay the penalty sooner or later. I do not think it is sufficient punishment to this man that he should get away with twenty millions of money, as I see is stated, to Holland or Corfu, or wherever he goes. I think he ought to stand his trial. With regard to the question of international law, well, we are making international law, and all we can claim is that international law should be based on justice. If he was not responsible, he can make his case. The League of Nations is a Committee composed either of diplomats or statesmen, but this ought to be a judicial tribunal which should be set up by the Allies. Germany ought to be invited to join in it, and I have no doubt she will send men, in her present state, who will judge the ex-Kaiser very impartially. There is a sense of justice in the world which will not be satisfied so long as this man is at large."

The project led to a lengthy discussion in which a variety of opinions were expressed—some favourable, some doubtful and some definitely hostile. Ultimately on the motion of the late Lord Reading, who was also present, the matter was referred to the Law Officers of the Crown in the following resolution:—

*Terms of
reference to
Law Officers* "(a) To invite the Law Officers of the Crown to examine, from the widest point of view, the question of framing charges against the ex-Emperor of Germany and/or the ex-Crown Prince—

(i) For the crime against humanity of having caused the war; and

(ii) For offences, by one or both, against international law during the war;

with a view to bringing home to one or both the responsibility for the acts charged;

(b) To invite the Law Officers of the Crown to consider the constitution of a tribunal to try the charges framed;

(c) To invite the Law Officers to examine with the Foreign Office the practicability of inducing the Dutch Government to hand over the ex-Emperor and the Crown Prince to such a tribunal for trial."

The Law Officers immediately took the matter in hand and investigated the case with the assistance of a very able and distinguished body of jurists whose names would carry conviction for their knowledge of international law and for their general soundness

of judgment. Apart from the Attorney-General, Sir F. E. Smith (afterwards Lord Birkenhead), there was Sir Gordon Hewart, the Solicitor-General, now Lord

Chief Justice of England. They were assisted in their study of the question by Professor J. H. Morgan, Sir John Macdonell, Sir Frederick Pollock, Sir Alfred Hopkinson, K.C., afterwards Chancellor of Manchester University, Mr. C. A. Russell, K.C., Dr. Pearce Higgins, Mr. Justice Peterson, Mr. C. F. Gill, K.C., the famous criminal lawyer, and Mr. J. F. More of the War Office. On November 28th, Sir F. E. Smith appeared at a meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet to give the views of the Law Officers and of this Committee of Experts. The late Lord Birkenhead was one of the most accomplished forensic orators of the day. In lucidity of exposition

*Constitution
of legal
Committee*

he was unsurpassed by any lawyer of his time. Few indeed were there who could rival him in this accomplishment. There was no man who wasted fewer words in the process of elucidation. The statement he made to the Imperial Cabinet on this case was an example of his style. As such, apart from the supreme interest of the subject, it is worth perusing and studying as a model of clarity and compression. It is a joy to read such limpid and vivid English. The experts had unanimously recommended a prosecution of the rulers who were responsible for the War, and in his statement to the Cabinet Lord Birkenhead set forth the arguments in favour of such a course with irresistible logic and cogency:—

“Prime Minister, Lord Curzon conveyed to the Law Officers of the Crown some days ago the desire of the Cabinet that they should give their opinion on this matter. The Law Officers pointed out the extreme importance, delicacy, and difficulty of the matter submitted to them, and the fact that they themselves were very much engaged in other matters, and asked what period of time could reasonably be allowed them to produce a written opinion adequate to the gravity of the topic. Lord Curzon at that time took the view that they might be allowed ten days. Well, of these ten days, only, I think, four or five have elapsed, and therefore the Cabinet will excuse any imperfection of form in the statement I am about to make. We have, however, arrived at a clear conclusion, otherwise we should have informed the Cabinet that we were not yet in a position to give definite and final advice. The matters involved here are

*Lord
Birkenhead's
report*

partly legal and partly matters of policy. So far as they are matters of policy, the Cabinet will of course merely treat our views as the opinions of colleagues who are not entitled to, and who are not claiming, any special weight. The main question here which we, in common with our Allies, have to consider is whether the taking of proceedings against, or any punitive treatment in relation to, the Kaiser should become the declared policy of the Government. The Law Officers of the Crown answer this question in the affirmative. They point out to the Cabinet that the choice now to be taken is between two diametrically opposed courses, and that no half-way house is possible in the matter. The first is a decision in favour of complete impunity, an impunity which will be described as luxurious and wealthy; the second is in favour of punishment. We wish the Cabinet to consider very carefully how it will be possible for them to justify a decision in favour of impunity. The ex-Kaiser's personal responsibility and supreme authority in Germany have been constantly asserted by himself, and his assertions are fully warranted by the constitution of Germany. Accepting, as we must, this view, we are bound to take notice of the conclusion which follows: namely, that the ex-Kaiser is primarily and personally responsible for the death of millions of young men; for the destruction in four years of 200 times as much material wealth as Napoleon destroyed in twenty years; and he is responsible—and this is not the least grave part of the indictment—for the most daring and dangerous challenge to the fundamental principles of public law which that

*Guilt of the
Kaiser*

indispensable charter of international right has sustained since its foundations were laid centuries ago by Grotius. These things are very easy to understand, and ordinary people all over the world understand them very well. How then, I ask, are we to justify impunity? Under what pretext, and with what degree of consistence, are we to try smaller criminals? Is it still proposed—it has been repeatedly threatened by the responsible representatives of every Allied country—to try, in appropriate cases, submarine commanders and to bring to justice the governors of prisons? Is it proposed to indict the murderers of Captain Fryatt? In my view, you must answer all these questions in the affirmative. I am at least sure that the democracies of the world will take that view, and among them I have no doubt that the American people will be numbered. How can you do this if, to use the title claimed by himself, and in itself illustrative of my argument, ‘the All Highest’ is given impunity? Must we not, at the moment of our triumph avoid the sarcasm: ‘*Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas*’? In order to illustrate the point which is in my mind I will read to the Imperial War Cabinet a very short extract, which represents our view with admirable eloquence, from Burke’s speech in the trial of Warren Hastings:—

‘We have not brought before you an obscure offender, who, when his insignificance and weakness are weighed against the power of the prosecution gives even to public justice something of the appearance of oppression; no, my Lords, we have brought before you the first man of India in rank, authority, and station. We

have brought before you the Chief of the tribe, the head of the whole body of eastern offenders; a captain-general of iniquity, under whom all the fraud, all the peculation, all the tyranny in India are embodied, disciplined, arrayed and paid. This is the person, my Lords, that we bring before you. We have brought before you such a person, that, if you strike at him with the firm and decided arm of justice, you will not have need of a great many more 'examples. You strike at the whole corps if you strike at the head.'

Prime Minister, in my judgment, if this man escapes, common people will say everywhere that he has escaped because he is an Emperor. In my judgment they will be right. They will say that august influence has been exerted to save him. It is not desirable that such things should be said, especially in these days. It is necessary for all time to teach the lesson that failure is not the only risk which a man possessing at the moment in any country despotic powers, and taking the awful decision between Peace and War, has to fear. If ever again that decision should be suspended in nicely balanced equipoise, at the disposition of an individual, let the ruler who decides upon war know that he is gambling, amongst other hazards, with his own personal safety.

For these reasons, we think the ex-Kaiser should be punished. If this view is accepted, the question arises: How is his person to be secured?

Problem of his extradition And the question has been asked, and will be asked, whether or not he can be extradited. Now, Sir, the French

have apparently expressed the view that he can. My own clear opinion is that that view is wrong, and I think my colleague, the Solicitor-General, is, on the whole, of the same opinion; but it is not necessary to argue that question, because we do not propose to involve ourselves in a doubtful technical argument when we have more powerful weapons at our disposal. Infinite vistas of litigious disputations are opened by an argument whether according to the law of Holland he can be extradited or not. And if, contrary to my opinion, he could be extradited, he could only be charged for the very offence (possibly a limited one) which had been successfully alleged as the ground in law of his extradition. I think it is unnecessary to ask whether in law we can extradite him, because it seems to me that Holland must, in effect, give him up. The League of Nations or the Conference of the Allies which will precede the formation of the League of Nations has, or will have, powerful arguments to address to Holland, and the internal condition of Holland seems to me to be such that it would be very difficult for her to reject arguments of the kind indicated. This is not a point of law, but my own conclusion is that the difficulty of obtaining control of the person of the ex-Kaiser from Holland will not be an insuperable one, though I should naturally defer to the views of the Foreign Office upon such a point. It may perhaps be assumed that the difficulty will not arise which would be occasioned in this connection by the ex-Kaiser's return to Germany. The taking of unnecessary risks has not up to the present been a distinguishing feature of his career. Different considerations might arise if the reconstitution of

Germany should really bring with it an honest desire to deal with the Kaiser themselves.

The few observations, therefore, which I have still to make will be made upon the assumption that it will be possible to obtain control of his person. I have made it clear *Alternatives of summary sentence or judicial trial* that in our judgment control should not be sought through the machinery of extradition. Supposing control of his person has been obtained, how is he to be dealt with? There are two alternative courses. In the first place, he might be treated by the Allies as Napoleon was treated, that is to say, by a high assertion of responsibility on the part of the conquering nations. The Allies might say: We are prepared, before the bar of history, to take upon ourselves the responsibility for saying that this man has been guilty of high crimes and misdemeanours, that he has broken the peace of the world, and that he ought either to be exiled or otherwise punished in his own person. That course may be recommended by powerful argument, and I do not myself exclude it, Prime Minister. I do not say more of it at this stage than this, that by its adoption we should avoid the risks of infinite delays and of a long drawn out impeachment. We should carry with us the sanction and support of the overwhelming mass of civilisation. And we are bold enough to feel that we have nothing to fear from the judgment of the future. It is even possible—as Austria and Germany will be reconstituted—that there will be few dissentients in the governing classes of these countries.

The second alternative is that he should be tried by a Court which must evidently be

international in its composition. There are obvious advantages in this method upon the moral side if this method of dealing with the situation be carried to a logical conclusion. It is, of course, very desirable that we should be able to say that this man received fair-play, and that he has had a fair trial, but grave difficulties beset this course in its complete application. In this connection, how is the Court to be constituted? Are neutrals to be members of the Court? Are Germans to be members of the Court?

*Constitution
of Court*

The only advantage of judicial procedure over the other alternative—a high exercise of executive and conquering force submitting itself to the judgment of history—lies in the fact that for all time it may claim the sanction of legal forms and the protection—in favour of the prisoner—of a tribunal whose impartiality can be established in the face of any challenge. This advantage, it must be observed, largely disappears if the fairness of the tribunal can be plausibly impeached. The Law Officers are not, indeed, of opinion that before a tribunal which consisted in part even of Germans, as Germany appears to be developing to-day, an indictment would necessarily fail. But it is unwise to ignore the difficulties. German and neutral representation would undoubtedly be claimed by the Kaiser. We can only qualify the consequent risk by saying that the German representatives would certainly be less German than they were, and the neutral representatives less neutral.

If a court be constituted, I confess that I myself incline on the whole to the view that the members of the court should consist only of citizens of the

Allied countries. Grave judges should be appointed, but we should, as it seems to me at present, take the risk of saying that in this quarrel we, the Allies, taking our stand upon the universally admitted principles of the moral law, take our own standards of right and commit the trial of them to our own tribunals.

I cannot, because time is short, develop the matter as I should like now, and therefore I merely place it on record that I am well aware that the opposite view may be supported by formidable arguments.

The great question which I shall probably be asked—and here again inter-Allied discussion will be necessary—is: For what offences, *Terms of indictment* in your view (assuming the adoption of judicial proceedings,) should the ex-Kaiser be made justiciable? The first charge which will occur to many persons is one which raises *in limine* the question of his responsibility for the origin of the war. Well, Sir, I can only say, without giving a decision, that the trial of such a charge would involve infinite disputation. We do not wish to become involved in a trial like that of Warren Hastings in its infinite duration. We do not wish to be confronted by a meticulous examination of the history of European politics for the past twenty years. It is very easy to see that no German advocate of the ex-Kaiser would find it difficult to enlarge the area of discussion, carrying it to what would be described in Germany as the 'ringing round' system, and discursively spreading from the question of the origin of the war to a close discussion of the military significance of the Russian strategic railways. The view which I have at present is that it would not

be wise to add so general a charge, but this provisional view might easily be modified if new and decisive documents were produced, like those recently disclosed by the Bavarian Minister, who was in Berlin in August, 1914. Such revelations are very likely to be made.

The second charge is extremely clear, and it is, in my judgment, a decisive one. A count should certainly be inserted in the indictment charging the Kaiser with responsibility for the invasion of Belgium in breach of International Law and for all the consequent criminal acts which took place. That is an absolutely clear issue, and upon it I do not think that any honest tribunal could hesitate. It is even possible, obscure as the present position in Germany is, that a partly German tribunal convened under existing circumstances in Germany would reach the same conclusion.

The next charge, in my judgment, which should be brought against him is that he is responsible in the matter of unrestricted submarine warfare. It may be necessary to associate other defendants in this charge.

But it will, in my judgment, be absolutely impossible for us to charge or punish any subordinate if the ex-Kaiser escapes with impunity all responsibility for the submarine warfare. I wish to press most strongly upon my colleagues certain fundamental considerations in regard to submarine warfare, as it has been carried on since the incident of the *Lusitania*. Since then thousands of women and children, in our clear and frequently expressed view, have been brutally murdered. I am dealing with the case

where a ship is torpedoed carrying no munitions of war, but which it is known must or may be carrying women and children, and where it is equally known that such passengers had no possible means of escape, and I do not in this connection deal with the vile cases of assassination when helpless boats, vainly attempting to escape, have been fired on and destroyed. Excluding the last class of cases, it is our view, and the view of the whole civilised world, that those acts amount to murder. It is surely vital that if ever there is another war, whether in ten or fifteen years, or however distant it may be, those responsible on both sides for the conduct of that war should be made to feel that unrestricted submarine warfare has been so branded with the punitive censure of the whole civilised world that it has definitely passed into the category of international crime. 'If I do it and fail,' the Tirpitz of the next war must say, 'I too shall pay for it in my own person.' How can we best secure that no one in future will dream of resorting to submarine warfare of this kind? You can best secure it by letting the whole world know that, by the unanimous consent of the whole of that part of the civilised world which has conquered in this war, the man responsible for those acts is responsible in his own person for that which he has done. To us of all people it is not possible to exaggerate the weight and force of these considerations. Nothing more vitally concerns these islands than that it should be recognised that these acts are crimes. The commission of such crimes, and their possible future development, menace us more directly than any other nation in the world.

The above are suggestions, and not necessarily exhaustive suggestions, in regard to the offences for which the Kaiser should be tried. There are other individual cases with which I do not think it necessary to trouble the Cabinet at this stage.

It is true that the Prime Minister authorised me to form a Committee to report upon these matters, but the Law Officers obviously cannot place their responsibility for advising the Government in legal matters in the hands of anybody else, and they have arrived at their conclusion independently of the conclusions of this Committee, and, indeed, before they were informed of them. I think I ought to point out who are the members who compose this Committee, which is the Sub-Committee on Law of the Main Committee."

Sir F. E. Smith then gave the Cabinet the names of the members of the Committee* and added:—

"Of these, Sir John Macdonell, Mr. Justice Peterson, and Mr. Gill are not members of the Sub-Committee on Law, but were called
Committee's in for the special purpose of discussing
unanimity the new issue as regards the ex-Kaiser.

I think the Lord Chief Justice will agree that it would not be possible in this country to form a stronger Committee for the purpose of arriving at a sound conclusion upon such matters. It is a source of satisfaction to the Law Officers that this Committee has unanimously and independently of them reached the conclusion that the ex-Kaiser ought to be punished, either by way of trial or as Napoleon was punished. The Committee

* These appear on page 101.

inclines to the first of those courses, namely that he should be tried. I am not at present wholly convinced upon this point, and, in the written opinion which the Solicitor-General and myself contemplate, we propose to discuss this matter in greater detail. Probably I have said enough to make the Cabinet aware of the views held by the Law Officers. I could, and would, have said much more if I were not concerned to be economical of your time. As chief Law Officer of the Crown, I say quite plainly that I should feel the greatest difficulty in being responsible in any way for the trial of subordinate criminals if the ex-Kaiser is allowed to escape."

I have rarely seen an assembly of Ministers so enthralled by the exposition of a case. Cabinet speeches are traditionally brief. The usual contribution lasts a maximum of five minutes. A Minister explaining a Budget or a Bill is necessarily allowed some latitude, but even then it never approximates the limits of Parliamentary indulgence. On this occasion Lord Birkenhead probably occupied three-quarters of an hour. He had no notes. He had no quotations. He therefore never read one sentence in his speech. It was indeed a masterly performance. The limpid clarity of the statement, the unerring choice of the apt word, the mellowness of a voice which had a great range but was subdued to the proportions and the quality of the audience, held every Minister, representing as they did between them the greatest Empire on earth, in complete bondage to the sway of one of the finest intellects and one of the most perfect speakers ever contributed by the British Bar to politics. It was a notable scene.

Fortunately it was one of the few occasions when the written word conveys some idea of the power of the deliverance.

It is worthy of note that those who expressed doubts at the first discussion were all present on this occasion and all now concurred in the Attorney-General's recommendation. There was not a dissentient voice, and the Imperial War Cabinet carried unanimously the following resolution:—

*Imperial
Cabinet's
decision*

“The Imperial War Cabinet adopted the report presented by the Attorney-General, and agreed that, so far as the British Government have the power, the ex-Kaiser should be held personally responsible for his crimes against international law.”

When I come to give an account of the meetings of the Inter-Allied Supreme Council held a few days later, it will be seen how completely and emphatically the attitude adopted by the Imperial War Cabinet was endorsed by the French and Italian Prime Ministers.

2. THE GERMAN COLONIES.

Mandates

At the meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet which dealt with the trial of the Kaiser there was a general and somewhat desultory discussion as to the disposal of the German Colonies. Two things however emerged from the conversations. One was that the Dominions were not prepared to give up any of the territories contiguous to their boundaries which had been conquered by them during the War. On the grounds

*Dominion view
on disposal of
German
Colonies*

of security they did not wish to have the Germans stationed near their respective countries, with the possibilities involved in submarine bases, air stations, and organisation of black armies, all of which might be a constant menace to their peace.

The second feature was the absence of any real desire on the part of the representatives of Great Britain to add any more territory to the vast areas of undeveloped land now under the flag. There was not only a readiness, but even an eagerness to bring in America and to hand over to her a mandate in respect of some of these German possessions.

*Not wanted
by Britain
or America*

I had previously thrown out a similar suggestion to Colonel House in a conversation which I had with him on the subject of the disposal of the German Colonies. He agreed that they could not be restored to Germany. But he was not disposed to regard with favour the idea of an American mandate for any of these Colonies, his view being that:—

“America could not run colonies. Their experiment with the Philippines had not been a great success. You required a special knack for handling colonies, which did not interfere with the population, and which allowed them to go their own way.”

After some further talk it was decided to have a more formal consideration of the whole problem.

At a subsequent meeting the disposal of these colonies led to a prolonged discussion. All the observations made were on the accepted basis that not a single captured colony should be restored to Germany by the Peace Treaty. There was complete unanimity amongst the Dominion representatives, whose forces

had conquered South-West Africa and German islands in the Southern seas, that these should be retained by the particular Dominion whose armies had effected the conquest. There was a considerable difference of opinion as to how the remaining German colonies should be disposed of. As I have already pointed out, there was no avidity on the part of the majority of the British Ministers to add to our Colonial possessions. The late Mr. Walter Long (afterwards Lord Long) was the only exception. I repeatedly urged that America should shoulder a part of the burden. I regarded Colonies not as possessions but as Imperial obligations and I asked:—

*My desire
to give
America a
share*

“why the Americans should not offer to take their share in any control that might be necessary. I see no reason why we should be asked to do it all.”

I subsequently called attention to some wise observations made on this subject during the summer by the Canadian Premier, Sir Robert Borden, and remarked that there was a great deal to be said for the policy he then advocated:—

*Sir Robert
Borden's
view*

“Sir Robert Borden had pointed out that it would create a very bad impression if the British Empire came out of this war with a great acquisition of territory, and if the United States undertook no new responsibilities. If America were to go away from the Conference with her share of guardianship, it would have a great effect on the world.”

SIR ROBERT BORDEN (who was always in close touch with American opinion)

“then read extracts from certain speeches made by President Wilson, in order to show the views which the President held. One of the most important assets that we could get out of the war would be assured goodwill and a clear understanding between Great Britain and the United States. There were very strong elements, such as the German and Irish, in the United States which were bitterly opposed to our Empire, and we must not put into the mouths of these people a plausible argument that we had gone into the war for territorial aggrandisement. He frankly said that, so far as Canada was concerned, she did not go into the war in order to add territory to the British Empire. In so far, however, as the colonies conquered by South Africa, Australia and New Zealand were concerned, he would be prepared to support their retention on one consideration, and one only, and that was that their acquisition was necessary for the future security of the Empire. As regards the remaining conquered territories, he was in favour of entrusting their control and dominion to whichever State was appointed as mandatory for that purpose by the League of Nations, on the lines suggested in General Smuts’ paper. The mandate would be for the development of those countries in the interests of the inhabitants until they were capable of governing themselves. He assumed, of course, that the French and others who had occupied enemy colonies would agree to the same policy.

LORD CURZON suggested that we might be too ready to assume that the United States would be willing to accept these obligations. If she accepted any such responsibilities, she might have to accept

them in Constantinople or Armenia before she accepted them in Africa.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE agreed that this was probable, but that by making the offer to America we would remove any prejudice against us on the ground of 'land-grabbing.' It was not a question of annexation, but of assuming a responsibility."

A short discussion followed as to the precise distinction between the occupation of a territory in a *System of mandates proposed* "possessory" and in a "mandatory" capacity.

"It was generally agreed that 'mandatory occupation' did not involve anything in the nature of condominium or international administration, but administration by a single Power on certain general lines laid down by the League of Nations. These lines would naturally include equality of treatment to all nations in respect of tariffs, concessions, and economic policy generally. Similarly, there would be no militarisation, or fortification of the territory in question. Finally, there would be a right of appeal from the mandatory Power to the League of Nations on the part of anyone who considered himself illtreated, or claimed that the conditions laid down by the League of Nations were not being fulfilled. Subject to such appeal, which might involve the League of Nations withdrawing the mandate in the case of deliberate and persistent violation of its conditions, the mandate would be continuous until such time as the inhabitants of the country themselves were fit for self-government.

LORD MILNER pointed out that the mandatory principle was not altogether an innovation. Our

administration of Egypt for thirty-five years was carried on on that principle, and subject to innumerable obligations which we consistently fulfilled, at one time even to the extent of giving a decided preference to other nations over ourselves. The more we had been able to get rid in Egypt of a condominium, the more satisfactorily were we able to carry out our duties as a mandatory.

MR. HUGHES suggested that, both as regards the Pacific Islands, which were in the immediate neighbourhood of Australia, and presumably in the case of German South-West Africa, the differentiating of their occupation from that of the adjoining Dominion would create insuperable difficulties in respect of customs, laws, coastwise trade, methods of economic development, labour laws, etc. He had made it perfectly clear to President Wilson that the demand for the Pacific Islands was being put forward in the interests of Australian security, and not in the interests of the British Empire.

LORD MILNER urged that the question of South-West Africa and the Pacific Islands should be treated quite separately from that of the other occupied colonies. We should make it clear with regard to them, from the outset, that we treated them as belonging to the Dominions concerned."

At this stage General Smuts put in an earnest and powerful plea for a British mandate in respect of German East Africa. He urged that:—

*Smuts on
future of
Tanganyika*

" . . . The British Empire was the great African Power right along the eastern half of the continent, and securing East

Africa would give us through communication along the whole length of the continent—a matter of the greatest importance from the point of view both of land and of air communications. In his opinion it was not only on the grounds of our conquests and sacrifices, but on the obvious geographical situation, that we were entitled to make a strong claim to being the mandatory in that region. Personally he would give up very much in order to attain that. He was not putting in a claim to East Africa for the South African Union, but the view he had expressed would be very strongly felt in the Union, which had taken the main share in the conquest of East Africa. He would prefer to see the United States in Palestine rather than East Africa.

MR. BALFOUR suggested that the line of argument pursued by General Smuts was perhaps playing a little fast-and-loose with the notion of mandatory occupation."

After a few speeches of this kind, in which objection was raised by some speakers to parting with any of the captured territories in the East, West or the Southern Seas, Mr. Montagu made the very caustic observation that:—

"It would be very satisfactory if we could find some convincing argument for not annexing all the territories in the world."

In a discussion about the particular African possessions which we were prepared to give to Italy by way of compensation under the terms of the Treaty of London, we had been confronted by a strong protest from the Navy against giving up any of our African

*Admiralty on
Italian claims*

conquests, on the ground that they were essential as naval bases. This egregious document recommended that French Somaliland would be a more suitable and valuable concession for the Italians.

Sir Robert Borden said that:—

“If the chief result of this war was a scramble for territory by the Allied nations, it would be merely a prelude to further wars.”

Mr. Churchill said that:—

“If we had to give up some territory he was strongly in favour of giving up German East Africa. We already had more territory in that part of the world than we had either the wealth or the capacity to develop. On the other hand, an African colony used for purposes of investment would raise no strategic question.”

When we came to discuss Palestine and Mesopotamia, Lord Curzon was opposed to the idea of an American Mandate for either of these two countries. He said that the inhabitants of the country themselves were unanimously in favour of a British Mandate.

The Palestine Mandate He drew attention to a resolution in favour of British trusteeship, passed by a meeting of American Jews, which was reported in the previous day's *Times*.

The Emir Feisal had stated emphatically that while he was prepared to throw in all his influence with the British in Palestine, even to the extent of helping the Jews, he would oppose any other Power with all his might. On the other hand, Lord Curzon continued, there was Armenia, where the inhabitants

themselves were asking for either French or American protection.

Lord Milner supported my views as to the desirability of securing the co-operation of America in the future control of the German possessions across the seas. He said:—
Lord Milner's views

“that he wished to get America in in any case. He considered that the future peace of the world depended on a good understanding between us, and regarded this policy of a mandate by the League of Nations not as a mere cloak for annexation, but as a bond of union leading to better working between the United States and ourselves. The essential thing was that we should survey the whole field from that point of view.”

In summing up the discussion, expressing agreement with Lord Milner, I said that:—

“the first step was to find out if the United States were prepared to take their share of responsibility in a mandatory capacity.”

No definite recommendations were come to by the Imperial Cabinet, but I gathered as a result of the discussions that the majority of the members of the Cabinet would be in favour of my sounding President Wilson on the question as to whether he was prepared to join the other Powers in accepting the position of a Mandatory, and I certainly inferred from the course of the discussion that with one exception the Cabinet would not be averse to handing over the Mandate for East Africa to the United States of America.

The outstanding feature of the conversations that took place was the complete unanimity with which the Imperial War Cabinet accepted the doctrine of the Mandate in respect of enemy possessions, except in South-West Africa and the islands conquered by Australia and New Zealand.

One cannot appreciate the attitude adopted by the Ministers who represented the various parts of the Empire on the question of the restoration to Germany of her lost Colonies without some understanding of the German colonial policy and the use to which German statesmen openly proclaimed they intended to put their Colonial Empire. German Ministers and publicists advertised their colonial aspirations with great frankness during the progress of the War. Their ambition was to found a black Empire in Africa extending across that continent from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. The territory comprised in their minimum claim would cover $7\frac{1}{2}$ million kilometres (3 million more than the whole of India) and would include a population of 30,000,000. German publicists laid special stress on the fact that as a large proportion of the native population was Mohammedan, there would thus be a more formidable Mohammedan Empire in Africa than in Turkey and it would be all under German control. As one of the most reputable of the German writers put it, in a document issued during the War:—

“We are fighting indirectly in order to get back our colonial territory *and to increase it.*
We are fighting for an Empire in Central Africa.”

Portugal and Belgium were in the main the contributors to this enlarged Empire, but France also

was to yield her share. The German Colonial Secretary, a very able statesman and also one who, in comparison with some of his associates, was reputed to be a very moderate man, thus expounded the official German view:—

*A new
partition
of Africa*

“(a) Africa is no longer the dark continent, but has become the foreland of Europe, with a great part to play as the producer of tropical raw materials for European industries.

(b) The existing partition of Africa among the European colonising States is recent, haphazard, and accidental, with the result that weak and ineffective Powers are in possession of gigantic areas which they cannot develop, while Germany, in spite of her position and power, finds herself left in the cold with considerably smaller and far-scattered territories.”

He therefore claims that when peace is made there shall be a repartition of Africa among the belligerent European countries. “In the treaty of peace there can only be the question of a *fresh partition*.”

“(c) In this fresh partition Germany must receive a continuous domain, large in extent because the war in Africa has shown that defensive power is in direct proportion to the size of the continuous area; with frontiers on both oceans and fortified naval bases, the importance of which has been demonstrated in this war.

(d) This domain must be adequately defended by white and especially black troops, but conventions ought to be concluded between the Powers against

the militarisation of the natives, who should not be employed in European or other campaigns outside their country."

Belgium was to be held as a pawn in this game. The Congo was to be the price of the evacuation of Belgium. The price of the withdrawal of German Armies from French soil was to be the surrender of French colonies in Central Africa. Britain was to be told that unless she restored German East Africa and perhaps South-West Africa, Germany would retain her hold on Belgium and the northern provinces of France. As one of their writers put it:—

"If the English are confronted with the choice of either allowing us to have these Colonies or of seeing us establish a direct or indirect dominion over Belgium, it will come easier to them to let us have the Colonial Empire."

That was the peace strategy of the German leaders.

To what use were they intending to put their African Empire? The primary motive put forward by all the German writers is economic—"a domain for the production of tropical raw materials for German industry, with the help of black labour working under white supervision." That is a perfectly legitimate aspiration and the sooner it is met by some equitable and practical adjustment, the better it will be for the peace and well-being of the world. General Smuts thought that Germany's reasonable claim for a fair share of African products should be met by the setting up of an International Board of Control in Central Africa, made up of representatives of

*Strategic
uses of an
African
Empire*

Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Portugal, with an American Chairman, whose functions would be confined to a distribution of tropical raw materials in Central Africa. But the aspect of German ambitions in this continent which alarmed Britain, the Dominions and India, was of a totally different character. It was the avowed purpose of Germany's policy to use this huge African territory, which she contemplated demanding as the price of peace, for strategic purposes, inimical—and in certain contingencies possibly fatal—to the interests of both the British and the French Empires in tropical Africa and in tropical seas. A Memorandum prepared for the German Imperial Cabinet in July, 1918, gives a summary of the aims proclaimed by German writers. The strategic case against the British Empire was very bluntly put by Emil Zimmermann, an ex-Civil Servant:—

“For our present unfavourable position in the Far East England—apart from Japan—is chiefly responsible; the principal opponent of our expansion in the Pacific is Australia. But we shall never be able to exercise pressure upon Australia from a base in the South Seas; we might very well do so from East Africa. Australia needs for its exports (minerals, wool, meat, tallow, butter, cheese, wheat) an open road through the Indian Ocean. This road can be gravely menaced from East Africa. It is true Australian commerce might take the route round the Cape; but even on this route merchant ships would hardly be safe against attacks directed from East Africa. The policy therefore, both of Australia and of India, might be very strongly influenced by pressure from German *Mittel-Afrika*, and British

*The menace
to Australia*

policy, too, since England has as strong an interest in unimpeded commercial intercourse with India and Australia as India and Australia have in unimpeded intercourse with England.

If we have a position of strength in *Mittel-Afrika*, with which India and Australia must reckon, then we can compel both of them to respect our wishes in the South Seas and in Eastern Asia, and we thereby drive the first wedge into the compact front of our opponents in Eastern Asia."

He looked forward to a German Africa Empire containing a population of 50 million blacks and 500,000 Germans out of which "it will be possible at any moment to mobilise an army of 1,000,000 men." Sir Erle Richards, in the document he prepared on the subject for the War Cabinet, says:—

"Some writers (German) lay stress upon the idea that this army will be used in Africa in order to keep the armies of her enemies employed there. But the majority anticipate that these troops will be used in any war as an addition to the German forces, and indeed, it is hardly likely that if Germany possessed these large supplies of trained troops, she would not use them in future wars. . . . Great stress is laid by all writers (German) on the importance of the harbours as providing bases from which they will be able to strike at the world's trade.

Great stress is laid on the fact that this German Central Africa will completely dominate the strategy of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, and will cut British land-power in Africa in two. Thus

Oskar Karstedt (after describing the territorial limits of the new Europe):—

‘A German *Mittel-Afrika*, as it is here sketched in outline, would besides yield the great advantage, from the point of view of world-policy, that it would set a bar, once for all, to England’s effort to become mistress of Africa from the Cape to Cairo. Within the territory, further, there would be enough places on the coast, which, when properly fortified and equipped, would be capable of furnishing Germany with the naval bases which it absolutely *must have* upon the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans. Such a German oversea Empire in Africa would be able to bid defiance to the strongholds of British power in Africa (Egypt and South-Africa), the mainstays of the whole British world-power. It would give us, not only a great part of what we want in order to be economically independent of England, but it would also put the means into our hands of *striking England home* at any moment with the help of our navy and the man-power latent in this future dominion.’

The smallest block mentioned . . . will comprise an area of between 7 and $7\frac{1}{2}$ million square kilometres (*cf.* area of India at a little over $4\frac{1}{2}$ million square kilometres), with a population of 30 million. This population will not only be capable of industrial exploitation on a large scale, but also of yielding an enormous black army under white officers, which will be a sufficient menace to French North Africa on the one hand, and Egypt and Arabia on the other, and will protect the southern

flank of the Turco-German route to the East, through Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. When this great army, invulnerable in the vastnesses of Central Africa, is backed up by adequate submarine, destroyer, and cruiser bases on both Atlantic and India seaboards, British seapower in those oceans will be dominated, and Central Africa will become for Germany the stepping-stone to world-power. From Central Europe through Central Africa to world-dominion is the programme of these writers.

The development of German world-power from a great Central African base will be materially assisted by the influence of the Mahommedan religion. German Central Africa will be largely Mahommedan in religion, and will thus enlist on the side of the Germans the powerful Mahommedan influence in North Africa, in the Soudan, in Egypt, Arabia, and in Asia generally. Central Africa will thus be only another step in the union of German militarism with Mahommedan fanaticism towards the conquest of the world. Through its Mahommedan affinities the Central African system will make its influence felt over a great part of the globe."

As far as the Pacific islands were concerned, the case—from the point of view of Australian security and of restoring to Germany colonies *Basis of* which would enable her to establish sub-
*Dominions' re-*marine bases within 20 miles of the shores
fusal to return of Australia—was very forcibly put by
Germany's Mr. Hughes in the course of the discussion.
Colonies

The Imperial War Cabinet approached the problem of the disposal of the German Colonies with all these considerations in front of them. If they

were reluctant to restore to Germany her lost possessions overseas, German Ministers and German writers were largely responsible for the attitude of suspicion and of anxiety with regard to the possible use that could be made by a hostile Germany of the opportunities which might be afforded her if she were once more put in command of large tracts of territory scattered here and there along the ocean shores of the world, on every line of communication between Britain and her Empire and the Empire and Britain. The encouragement given to the Boer rebellion from South-West Africa and the incidents of this war, such as shelter afforded to German raiders in the Indian Ocean, had taught Germany how unlimited were the possibilities provided by these possessions of inflicting dangerous wounds upon the British Empire. Fortunately for us it was too late for Germany to utilise her advantages when she first discovered them. But should there be any future conflicts between Germany and ourselves—which Heaven avert, but which all the same, Hell and its agents in all countries are doing their utmost to precipitate—Germany would be fully alive to the usefulness of these vast tropical territories with their numerous inlets, their great coastline fronting upon the east and upon the west, their submarine and air bases and the myriads of virile men who live in these lands, and whose aptitude for soldiering was so effectively demonstrated by General von Lettow in his memorable campaign against great odds.

In view, therefore, of the open and avowed intentions of German Colonial policy for the future, it cannot be wondered at that there was complete unanimity amongst Allied statesmen that the German Colonies should not be restored to their former

*Unanimity of
Allied states-
men*

owners. If von Lettow could accomplish so much with a few thousand black troops led by a Commander of genius, what could be achieved by a vast negro army of 1,000,000 men? No reconsideration of mandates is conceivable except under conditions and guarantees which would make it impossible for Germany to convert her hold on an African Colony into a formidable military, naval or aerial menace to her neighbours. She has shown us in Spain, that she has no scruples about the using of a trained black army to destroy democracy in Europe and that she has no racial prejudices that will prevent her from sending German soldiers to co-operate with African legionaries against the liberties of a white race in its own country.

Inasmuch as the Imperial War Cabinet were more particularly concentrating on these aspects of the Treaty upon which a preliminary discussion with President Wilson was desirable in order to clear up any possible misunderstanding before the Congress formally opened, we devoted a considerable part of our attention to the Italian claims and to the composition of the League of Nations. The interchange of views at the Imperial Cabinet on these questions will be given in the chapters which deal respectively with these subjects.

3. THE INTERALLIED CONFERENCE TO PREPARE FOR THE PEACE CONGRESS

M. Clemenceau and Marshal Foch arrived in London on the 30th of November and were given such a reception as I have never seen accorded to any foreign visitors to our shores. The dimensions of the crowd and still more the intensity of the enthusiasm displayed were beyond anything I had ever witnessed

*Welcome to
Clemenceau
and Foch*

on such occasions. The King met the distinguished visitors at the station and drove Marshal Foch in his carriage through the crowded streets to Buckingham Palace. I accompanied M. Clemenceau to the French Embassy. I have never seen this hardened old veteran so much moved. He knew England and Englishmen well but he never thought they were capable of displaying such emotional warmth. It was to him a genuine and an agreeable surprise—a surprise which he expressed at every street through which he passed. The scene at Trafalgar Square was overwhelming.

The first meeting of the Conference which ensued was held in Downing Street that evening. The discussion was confined to the arrangements which had to be made for the occupation of the Rhine bridgeheads by Allied troops. The French were represented by Marshal Foch and General Weygand; the British Army by Sir Henry Wilson. I was accompanied by Mr. Balfour. M. Clemenceau had a social engagement which prevented his attendance. When I discovered the real topic which was to be raised, I realised why he was absent. The wily old politician, knowing our partiality for Foch and the debt of gratitude we owed him, deemed it advisable that the first introduction of French ideas as to the future of the Rhineland should be left to him.

This meeting is notable for being the first intimation given to the British Government that the French intended to secure control over all the *French demand frontier on the Rhine* territory on the left bank of the Rhine. As was his wont, Foch came straight to the point without wasting words:—

“ . . . Considering, however, only military necessities, whatever the form of government on the right bank of the Rhine might be, namely, an

Empire, Republic or Confederation, there would be concentrated there from 55 to 75 million Germans, and these, if they wished, might endeavour to repeat the experience of 1914. In such an event, what would be the means of defence? If there were no material barrier set up, and no special precautions taken, the invasion of France, Luxemburg, and Belgium, might again be undertaken. More particularly, the Belgian coast would be easier for the enemy to reach, for they now realised the importance of it, and would endeavour to cut England from France. The natural barrier against such an invasion was the Rhine.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked what Marshal Foch proposed?

MARSHAL FOCH said that Germany ought to be limited to the right bank of the Rhine. Even so, she would have a population of some 60 millions. We had to consider, therefore, what arrangements should be made on the left bank of the Rhine. It was perfectly useless to rely on neutral States as barriers. Belgium and Luxemburg as neutrals really constituted no effective defence. Hence, there was nothing for it but to have an armed State ready to fight, if necessary, against Germany. He then considered the States on the left bank of the Rhine. France, Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine and Luxemburg would give an aggregate of 49 million inhabitants. If to these were added the Rhenish Provinces on the left bank of the river, there would be a population of 54,900,000. Practically, therefore, in case of a coalition of all the countries on the left bank of the Rhine, there would be 55 millions against 65 to 75 millions on the right bank. With this agglomeration of countries, namely, France, Belgium

and Luxemburg, properly organised in a military sense, it would probably be practicable to hold the line of the Rhine. If, however, the line of the Rhine were forced by a surprise attack there would be a repetition of the war of 1914, and in this case it was absolutely essential that Great Britain should lend her assistance. Otherwise Germany would become the master of the whole of the West. Hence it was essential that there should be a permanent mutual assistance between all the countries of the West. France, Belgium, Luxemburg, the Rhine lands left of the river, and Great Britain—all organised for the defence of the Western front. We ought to prepare an Alliance, *including the Rhenish Provinces*, whether they were in an autonomous organisation or not (a question which he did not wish to discuss) which would provide forces fully organised to safeguard the position. The control of the organisation should be under Great Britain, France and Belgium.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked what he contemplated would be the political condition of the German Provinces on the left bank of the Rhine? Would they be independent, or who would govern them?

MARSHAL FOCH said that they would probably be independent. They might consist of one State or several States. All that he insisted on was that they should be included in an economic and military system. His object was not to annex or to conquer, but merely to profit by our experience and provide proper defence against the 75 million inhabitants on the right bank of the Rhine.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked Marshal Foch how he reconciled his proposals with President Wilson's Fourteen Points?

MARSHAL FOCH thought it could be arranged. We could defend it on the grounds that we have before us a political organisation which, in spite of treaties, Hague Conventions, etc., has launched on the world the late tremendous war. The signature of this nation to any treaty could not be trusted. As this was the case, it was necessary to take material precautions. The military barrier of the Rhine was the obvious precaution to take.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked what would be the position if the inhabitants of the left bank of the Rhine did not like this scheme and declared in favour of being joined to Germany?

MARSHAL FOCH said that they must be brought to our side by the attraction of our economic organisation. There would be another attraction, that it was better to be on the side of the victors than of the conquered.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked whether Marshal Foch did not fear the danger of creating a new Alsace-Lorraine on the other side, which would in course of years result in a new war of revenge?

MARSHAL FOCH said that, of course, he would take precautions to conciliate the feelings and interests of these people.

MR. BONAR LAW pointed out that Germany had said exactly the same thing. We ourselves had tried for years to conciliate the Irish.

MARSHAL FOCH then handed Mr. Lloyd George a note he had himself prepared on this question, and asked him to read and study it. The whole problem was a very grave and large one and required mature consideration.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that he would study Marshal Foch's memorandum very carefully. Any-

thing that emanated from Marshal Foch would start with a predisposition in its favour. Nevertheless, we must be very careful not to create new problems in Europe.

MARSHAL FOCH concurred in this consideration."

This is the first occasion when the differences between the British and French point of view about the future settlement of the territories on the left bank of the Rhine were revealed. But the fact that this was the first topic raised by the French at the first Conference held after the Armistice to discuss the Peace settlement, shows the importance they attached to it.

The first full Conference was held in Downing Street the following day. France was represented by M. Clemenceau and Marshal Foch, and Italy by Signor Orlando, the Italian Premier, and Baron Sonnino, the Foreign Secretary. *Full Downing Street Conference* Colonel House was to have represented the United States, but a serious illness which incapacitated him for some weeks detained him in Paris. America was thus unrepresented at these important preliminary conversations. It is rather characteristic of President Wilson's suspicious nature that he would not depute the task of representing his views, or even of reporting the views of the delegates of other nations, to the American Ambassadors in France or in London.

The first subject discussed was that of Reparations. An account of this discussion is given in the Chapter on Reparations.

The next subject that came up for consideration was the trial of the Kaiser for his supreme personal responsibility in precipitating the terrible calamities of wholesale murder and destruction upon the world.

Lord Birkenhead's report on this subject was circulated to all the delegates at the Conference before the meeting. I opened the proceedings by calling attention to its purport. Up to that date I had made no public allusion to the subject. In fact I made no public reference to it until the 9th of December, a week after the Conference had come to a conclusion as to the action which the Allies had resolved to take. It has been suggested that this proposal was due entirely to my initiative and that, although the Allied Governments gave reluctant and lukewarm acquiescence to this idea, I was alone responsible for it and for pressing it forward. Let those who still think that, peruse extracts from the official record of the discussions that took place at the Imperial War Cabinet (which I have already quoted), and at the first Allied Conference after the Armistice. Here is a summary of the discussion which took place on the latter occasion as to the attitude to be adopted by the Allies towards the ex-Kaiser:—

“MR. LLOYD GEORGE referred to papers which had been circulated to all those present in regard to the ex-Kaiser. Those documents consisted of a statement made to the British War Cabinet by Sir F. E. Smith, Attorney-General, on behalf of the Law Officers of the Crown, and the recommendations of a legal committee of very highly expert jurists which had been appointed by the British Law Officers to the Crown to advise them.

The opinion of the British Law Officers had been that the ex-Kaiser ought to be punished, and that, if the ex-Kaiser was made justiciable, the charges on which he should be tried should be the following:—

1. His responsibility for the invasion of Belgium in breach of international law, and for all consequent criminal acts which took place.
2. His responsibility in the matter of unrestricted submarine warfare.
3. Offences in the category of the execution of Captain Fryatt.

He then read extracts from the report of the Committee of Jurists who had advised that it is desirable to take proceedings against the ex-Kaiser personally, had suggested an International Tribunal composed of representatives of the chief Allied States and of the United States of America.

A closely connected question, MR. LLOYD GEORGE pointed out, was that of the responsibility of officers in charge of prisoners' camps. In some of the German prisoners' camps the treatment of British prisoners had been very good; in others their treatment had been very bad. In such cases we ought to demand the surrender of those responsible and try them.

BARON SONNINO said that he had read the reports, which were very well produced.

He felt, however, that the question must be considered from the general political point of view.

Sonnino's objections Were the Allies desirous of making the ex-Kaiser a patriotic martyr from the point of view of Germany of the future?

Were we to examine whether the Bundesrath were not equally responsible? Was it right to examine whether the leaders of a nation were responsible for the action of the nation? Was not the nation responsible as a whole?

In this connection he pointed out that a nation usually gets the Government it deserves. He

questioned the desirability of making a scape-goat. Was not St. Helena useful to the Bonapartists? The answer was 'Yes'; and the régime of Napoleon III had been the result.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that he thought it would show an immense progress if we could punish the man who was guilty of a great historic crime like the declaration of war in August, 1914. All the Governments represented here to-day were proud of the principle of responsibility. As a rule, it only meant responsibility in newspaper articles and books, which the great criminals of the world could afford to laugh at. He was not one of those who was sure we could immediately set up a League of Nations. A great step, however, would have been taken towards internal understanding if the peoples of the world could feel that the greatest criminals, such as the ex-Kaiser, would be brought to trial. He therefore supported energetically the proposition of Mr. Lloyd George that the ex-Kaiser and his accomplices should be brought before an international tribunal.

BARON SONNINO asked who were the accomplices?

M. CLEMENCEAU said that the Court must determine this. The ex-Crown Prince would certainly be the first of them. The same could not be said of some of the great soldiers, who had merely obeyed orders. If, however, we could get seven or eight persons, and make them responsible before an international tribunal, this would be an enormous progress for humanity. Hence, he regretted to have to separate himself from his friend Baron Sonnino and rally to Mr. Lloyd George. The ex-Kaiser was the person really responsible for the war, and this case must be entirely separated from that of camp

commandants and others who had been guilty of ill-treating prisoners. These latter ought to be court-martialled (MR. LLOYD GEORGE interjected that he agreed.) Frankly, he himself had no other idea than to bring the ex-Kaiser to justice. The people everywhere would be satisfied if this could be done. They will feel that justice will in future be done in the case of Kaisers and Kings just as much as in the case of common men. If this could be achieved, it would be a magnificent advance and a moral revolution.

MR. BONAR LAW said there was no doubt that public sentiment was with M. Clemenceau.

M. ORLANDO (the Italian Prime Minister) said that the question was exclusively one of sentiment and it had nothing to do with interests.

Orlando favours trial Therefore, no surprise need be felt if he differed from his colleague, Baron Sonnino. It was a great question of the universal conscience of mankind. It was not a question for examination by a small Committee of expert lawyers. It was a matter of universal sentiment which touched the highest moral laws. We had just witnessed the reaction of the world from a veritable crime against humanity. There was something to be said in the past for ideas that nations should be responsible for the faults of their Governments, and there were historical instances of this. In the present case, however, we were not dealing with mere blunders, but with crimes, and the ex-Kaiser ought to pay like other criminals. The ex-Kaiser, for example, had decorated, personally, captains of submarines which had come straight back from perpetrating murder. As to the method by which the ex-Kaiser should be brought to book, this was a question of detail. One plan would be

to have a declaration by the Allied Governments pronouncing the ex-Kaiser to be a criminal. On principle, however, he was in accord with Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau. As to the idea that the ex-Kaiser might be regarded as a martyr, he personally did not believe that he ever would be. Anyhow, we could not calculate for centuries ahead, and we had to deal with a very strong sentiment in all countries at the present time.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that if the question of principle were accepted there were two questions of detail he would like to raise. The first was in regard to the time for action. Should we await the Peace Conference, or, in the event of the United States of America agreeing with us, should we demand the surrender of the ex-Kaiser?

M. CLEMENCEAU said we ought to await the arrival of President Wilson.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE agreed, unless President Wilson was prepared to accept the views of the Conference on the subject.

M. CLEMENCEAU agreed in this.

It was agreed that:—

A communication on this subject should be made to President Wilson, and Mr. Lloyd George undertook to put forward a draft telegram at the afternoon meeting.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that the second question was as to whether the condemnation of the ex-Kaiser was to be effected by the decision of the Governments, or as the result of a trial. The latter course was much the more striking.

*Problem of
Procedure*

M. CLEMENCEAU said that he stood for trial.

M. ORLANDO said that the question of the constitution of the Court presented almost insurmountable difficulties.

BARON SONNINO asked what would be done if Holland declined to give up the ex-Kaiser, basing herself on her tradition of Liberal views.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that Holland would then be put outside the League of Nations.

M. CLEMENCEAU agreed. . . . He said that there would be no question of Holland standing against the opinion of all the Allied Powers.

MR. BALFOUR said that if the action against the ex-Kaiser were taken by administrative action, as in the case of Napoleon, it would be a clear and simple course, but it would lose the advantages of a legal trial. On the other hand, the plan of a trial had the disadvantage that it would probably be necessary to bring in neutrals, and the Allies would lay themselves open to all the delays of the law which would weary the whole world. There had been a famous British political trial which had lasted seven years. It would be possible to drag into the trial all questions such as to whether Germany was justified in anticipating the completion of the Russian railway system. There would be all the arguments of lawyers, which would draw attention off the main fact that this man was the ringleader in the greatest crime against the human race on which the eyes of the whole world ought to be fixed.

M. CLEMENCEAU said he knew nothing about the methods on which the political trials were conducted in England. In France, however, an important political trial was now being held. The case

was before the Senate. The Senate made its own procedure and gave instructions. It was a sovereign body and made its own law. If this course were adopted, all Mr. Balfour's objections in regard to procedure would disappear. There would be no neutrals on the Tribunal. They had no right to it, they had not intervened in the war, and had undergone no sacrifice. The right of constituting the Court belonged to those who had made sacrifices. The Allies had secured this right by their immense losses in men and sacrifices of all kinds.

MR. BALFOUR asked if this course would not take away all appearance of impartiality? If the Allies set up the Court themselves, where would be the moral effect before the world?

M. CLEMENCEAU said that all justice was relative, and that the impartiality of all judges was liable to be questioned. It was a misfortune which could not be helped. But when a crime took place on a scale so unprecedented in history, he thought that France, Great Britain, Italy, and the United States must place themselves high enough to take the responsibility for dealing with it.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE pointed out that every judge tried an offence against the society of which he was a member. The same would be applicable in the present case."

At the end of the meeting the following telegram was sent to President Wilson on behalf of the Prime Ministers of Britain, France and Italy:—

"At a Conference of the Governments of France, Great Britain, and Italy, held in London this

*President
Wilson
informed of
Conference's
view*

morning, the three Governments agreed to recommend that a demand ought to be presented to Holland for the surrender of the person of the ex-Kaiser, for trial by an international court, to be appointed by the Allies, on the charge of being the criminal mainly responsible for the War and the breaches of international law by the forces of Germany by land, sea, and air.

During its deliberations the Conference had before it the opinion of a Committee of nine of the most eminent jurists of the British Isles, who recommended unanimously that the ex-Kaiser and his principal accomplices should be brought to trial before a court consisting of nominees of the principal nations victorious in the war.

In coming to the conclusion set forth above, the Conference were influenced by the following principal considerations:—

(a) That justice requires that the ex-Kaiser and his principal accomplices who designed and caused the war with its malignant purpose, or who were responsible for the incalculable sufferings inflicted upon the human race during the war, should be brought to trial and punished for their crimes.

(b) That the certainty of inevitable personal punishment for crimes against humanity and international right will be a very important security against future attempts to make war wrongfully or to violate international law, and is a necessary stage in the development of the authority of a League of Nations.

(c) That it will be impossible to bring to

justice lesser criminals, such as those who have oppressed the French, Belgians, and other peoples, committed murder on the high seas, and maltreated prisoners of war, if the arch-criminal, who for thirty years has proclaimed himself the sole arbiter of German policy, and has been, so in fact, escapes condign punishment.

(d) That the court by which the question of responsibility for the war and its grosser barbarities should be determined ought to be appointed by those nations who have played a principal part in winning the war, and have thereby shown their understanding of what freedom means and their readiness to make unlimited sacrifices in its behalf.

(This clause is intended to relate only to the composition of the court which will deal with crimes committed in connection with the late war, and is not intended to prejudice the question of the composition of international courts under a League of Nations.)

The Conference hopes that the Government of the United States will share its views and co-operate with the Allies in the presentation to Holland of a demand for the surrender of the person of the ex-Kaiser and of the Crown Prince for trial before an international court to be appointed by the Allies."

President Wilson subsequently intimated that he was in agreement with the decision arrived at by the Allies, on this subject.

The topic was then raised over which I had the fortune to be somewhat at variance with one

taking into consideration the need for maintaining internal order: and as to the manner in which they should be raised.

The Imperial War Cabinet similarly instructed:—

The Deputy First Sea Lord, in the light of the same considerations, to revise the estimate which the Board of Admiralty had already made with regard to the strength to which the enemy fleets should be reduced.

Reports on the above subjects to be available early next week.

With regard to Russia, MR. LLOYD GEORGE explained that President Wilson, though not pro-Bolshevik, was very much opposed to armed intervention. He disliked the *Russian problems* Archangel and Murmansk expeditions and would, no doubt, withdraw his troops from there. He was not very much in favour of the Siberian expedition, though as regards that his principal anxiety was as to the conduct of the Japanese, who were apparently taking the whole of Eastern Siberia into their own hands, sending sealed waggons into the interior, and generally behaving as if they owned the country. His whole attitude, in fact, was strongly anti-Japanese.

LORD ROBERT CECIL reminded the Imperial War Cabinet that the Japanese had just informed us that they were removing 30,000 out of the 60,000 Japanese troops now in Siberia.

With regard to the Western frontiers of Russia, MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that they had discussed the question, but had come to no sort of conclusion, as they felt the information was too defective. It

was not clear, for instance, how far the so-called invasion of Esthonia or Poland was a direct invasion by Bolshevik forces from outside, or an internal Bolshevik rising in those countries. The President had not shown any keenness on the idea that Russia should be represented at the Conference. On the other hand he had suggested that we should ask M. Litvinoff formally and definitely what his proposals were. Mr. Lloyd George suggested that it might be possible to take more formal steps to ascertain exactly what the Bolshevik Government were prepared to do.

A short discussion followed with regard to the informal negotiations which had already taken place, arising out of the telegram from M. Litvinoff, transmitted by Mr. Clive from Stockholm where he had met Litvinoff. It was pointed out by Lord Robert Cecil that we could not definitely act on President Wilson's suggestion without communicating with our Allies, some of whom took a very strong line against the Bolsheviks. We ourselves had, in fact, asked our Allies and some neutral Powers to keep out the Bolsheviks. The discussion on this question, however, was postponed pending the production of M. Litvinoff's answer to our request for definite proposals.

With regard to the Near East, MR. LLOYD GEORGE informed the Imperial War Cabinet that

*Future of
Turkey* President Wilson expressed himself in favour of the Turks being cleared out of Europe altogether, and of their place at Constantinople being taken by some small Power acting as a mandatory of the League of Nations. Mr. Balfour had told the President that the Eastern Committee had been in favour of the

United States acting as mandatory at Constantinople. With regard to this, President Wilson had pointed out that the United States were extremely proud of their disinterested position in this war and did not wish to be deprived of that pride. It would be difficult to persuade them that such a mandate was not a profit, but really a burden. Altogether, he had shown himself very much opposed to any intervention on the part of the United States in these territorial questions. To this Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Balfour had replied by asking the question who was to undertake the burden of finding the two divisions, or whatever troops might be required, to prevent the Armenians from being massacred. The President had not given a definite answer but had certainly not yet reached the point of accepting the argument.

LORD CURZON said that he had put the same point to the President himself, and that the President had replied asking that we should lead him a little more slowly up to his fences; that, if the League of Nations were once constituted and the Conference had been sitting some time, the United States might possibly be less reluctant to consider the question of mandatory intervention. As regards Constantinople, he reminded the Imperial War Cabinet that the Eastern Committee had only discussed the suggestion, and had not actually recommended that it should be entrusted to the United States.

As regards the German colonies, the President agreed that they could not be returned to Germany, and that they should be put under some Power acting as a mandatory. Mr. Lloyd George had impressed upon him the distinction between the German

*Wilson on
German
Colonies*

colonies conquered by the British Dominions and adjacent to them, and those in the conquest of which the forces of the Empire as a whole had shared. He had expressed our willingness to leave German East Africa at the disposal of the League of Nations, and to accept all the conditions imposed by the League if we were entrusted with a mandate for its administration. In the other category he had put German South-West Africa as the strongest case, pointing out that it would be quite impossible to separate from the South African Union what was essentially part of the same country. The President did not seem prepared to contest that contention, but of his own accord retorted that the position of Australia with regard to the Pacific colonies was not quite the same. Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Balfour had endeavoured to put the case as strongly as they could for Australia, on the grounds of security, but the President had answered that a case on similar grounds might be made for every other captured territory. In answer to the argument that we had definitely promised to Japan the islands in the Northern Pacific, and that it would be impossible to deny to Australia and New Zealand what was given to Japan, the President had shown that he was by no means prepared to accept the Japanese treaty, and was doubtful whether Japan could be admitted there even in the capacity of a mandatory Power. They had not succeeded in moving him from that position.

MR. BONAR LAW, who was present at that part of the discussion, said that President Wilson had remarked in that connection that he regarded it as his function to act as a buffer to prevent disagreeable things, such as the Japanese retention of the islands, being carried out.

LORD CURZON suggested that President Wilson ought not to be regarded as a sole arbiter in these matters; he would be only one of a party round the Conference Table.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE agreed. He was only reporting the President's views, and had in no sense accepted them as final. With regard to the Colonies, he had left the matter by telling the President that the question would have to be fought out at the Conference, where the Dominions would be able to present their own case.

With regard to indemnity, Mr. Lloyd George reported that he found the President, on the whole, stiffer than on any other question. The utmost concession he seemed inclined to make was that the claims for pure reparation should be tabled first, and that then other claims might possibly be considered afterwards. Mr. Lloyd George had pointed out that that practically ruled the British Empire out in spite of the enormous burdens it had borne, and that France and Belgium, who had borne a lesser burden, would practically get everything. He had pointed out also that as a matter of fact our own burden of over £6,000,000,000 to a population of 45,000,000 was much heavier than that of Germany with a similar debt distributed over 65,000,000 of people. Similarly, he had pointed out that Australia at this moment owed £75 for every man, woman, and child of her population, a loss which was just as real as any loss represented by destroyed houses. He had, however, failed to make any impression upon the President.

In answer to a question by Mr. Hughes, Mr. Lloyd George said that with regard to the question of economic barriers, raised in No. 3 of the Presi-

dent's Fourteen Points, the President had shown no inclination to raise the matter. His opinion was that President Wilson meant nothing in particular by that Article anyhow, and since he had brought it forward he had lost the election in the United States.

With regard to Italy, Mr. Lloyd George reported that he found President Wilson distinctly anti-

Anti-Italian bias Italian, as the consequence of the conversations he had had with Baron Sonnino. He and Mr. Balfour had tried to do their best to state Baron Sonnino's

case with regard to the strategical position of the Dalmatian coast, but the President's only suggestion was that the Power to whom the Dalmatian coast was given should be forbidden to have a navy at all.

MR. HUGHES said that, in other words, the President held the view that those Powers which had ports should have no fleets, and that only those Powers which had no ports should be allowed to have them.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that in any case it was clear that the President would strongly support the Jugo-Slavs against Italy.

With regard to France, he did not think the President was prepared to tolerate schemes for the control of the west bank of the Rhine, though he might be prepared to accept the French annexation of the Saar Valley.

With regard to the proposed Inter-Allied Conference, they had found the President entirely opposed to holding such a Conference, at any rate formally. He considered that the general Peace Conference would be a sham if definite conclusions were simply arrived at beforehand and then presented to Germany. He was quite prepared to hold inter-Allied discussions in Paris between the four Powers

informally, and agreed that definite decisions would have to be arrived at there and presented to Germany at the Peace Conference. It really came to the same thing, but the President insisted definitely on his point of view.

LORD CURZON suggested that, unless the President got beyond the very loose talk he had had with members of the British Government in this country, the Peace Conference would be a dreary fiasco. In any case, France had a very different conception of what was to be done, as was shown by the French proposals for the representation of the smaller Allies at the Inter-Allied Conference.

With regard to the language to be used at the Peace Conference, MR. LLOYD GEORGE mentioned that the President proposed to insist that English and French should both be the official languages, and that the reports of the Conference should be published in both languages.

Lord Robert Cecil undertook to communicate with our representatives abroad, with a view to their supporting Colonel House's attitude in this matter.

With regard to the question of publicity, Mr. Lloyd George mentioned that President Wilson had been in favour of allowing the papers to publish what they liked, and to impose no restrictions.

MR. HUGHES said that if we were not very careful, we should find ourselves dragged quite unnecessarily behind the wheels of President Wilson's chariot. He readily acknowledged the part which America had played in the war. But it was not such as to entitle President Wilson to be the god in the machine at the

*Mr. Hughes
objects to
a Wilson
dictatorship*

peace settlement, and to lay down the terms on which the world would have to live in the future. The United States had made no money sacrifice at all. They had not even exhausted the profits which they had made in the first two and a half years of the war. In men, their sacrifices were not even equal to those of Australia. Relatively their sacrifices had been nothing like as much as those of Australia. America had neither given the material nor the moral help which entitled her to come before France. If M. Clemenceau took the line which President Wilson seemed to be taking, he (Mr. Hughes) might be prepared to say, 'You have a right to speak.' He hoped that Great Britain and France, which had both sacrificed so much, would defend their own interests, and not let their future be decided for them by one who had no claim to speak even for his own country. Mr. Lloyd George had received an overwhelming vote from his fellow-countrymen, not only in recognition of what he had done but because of their confidence that he would see to it that their sacrifices had not been made in vain. In taking up that line at the Peace Conference, Mr. Lloyd George would have not only all England, but more than half America behind him. He and M. Clemenceau could settle the peace of the world as they liked. They could give America the respect due to a great nation which had entered the war somewhat late, but had rendered great service. It was intolerable, however, for President Wilson to dictate to us how the world was to be governed. If the saving of civilisation had depended on the United States, it would have been in tears and chains to-day. As regards the League of Nations, Mr. Hughes considered that a League of Nations which

was to endure and weather the storms of time would have to be a thing like the British Empire, framed in accordance with historical associations and practical needs. President Wilson, however, had no practical scheme at all, and no proposals that would bear the test of experience. The League of Nations was to him what a toy was to a child—he would not be happy till he got it. His one idea was to go back to America and say that he had achieved it, and that everything else could then be left for the League of Nations to complete. He (Mr. Hughes) did not consider that the peace of the world could be settled on the terms of 'Leave it all to the schedule.' Speaking for Australia, he wanted to know what Australia was to get for the sacrifices she had made. When he had secured what he wanted, the Freedom of the Seas, as we knew it and meant to have it, and necessary guarantees for the security and development of the Empire and reparation and indemnities, then he would have no objection to handing over other matters to a League of Nations. Such a League must, however, be properly constituted, and one in which the British Empire occupied a place corresponding to its sacrifices in the war and its position in the world. He insisted that in any case we should not commit ourselves to the League of Nations until the Conference had completed its labours. To start with a League of Nations and then continually refer everything to this League would mean giving up the substance for the shadow. The League of Nations should be the gilded ball on the dome of the cathedral, and not the foundation-stone.

As regards the German colonies in the Pacific, he thought that President Wilson was talking of a problem which he did not really understand. New

Guinea was only 80 miles from Australia. In any case, whatever else the people of Australia differed on, they were united on two things: firstly their attitude towards Japan and the White Australia policy; and secondly, the retention of these islands. He asked above all things that the Prime Minister who now stood clothed with all power by the recent vote of the people, should resolutely insist upon such terms of peace as were necessary for the safety of the Empire, through whose sacrifices and efforts victory had been won.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN suggested that it might be made clear to President Wilson that there should be a British Monroe doctrine for the Southern Pacific.

LORD CURZON considered that Mr. Hughes' views were shared by many members of the Imperial War Cabinet. More particularly he thought it was felt that Mr. Lloyd George should remember the power he possessed not merely in virtue of the recent election, but of all the sacrifices made by the British Empire, and of the interests which it had at stake all over the world. While holding the opinion that the future fortunes of the world must largely depend on co-operation between England and America, he did feel that if President Wilson persisted in the line reported it might be necessary, on some issues at any rate, for Mr. Lloyd George to work at the Conference in alliance with M. Clemenceau.

MR. LONG agreed cordially with the views expressed by Lord Curzon, adding that he did not think that President Wilson realised what the conquest of German East Africa had meant, or the extent to which every part of the British Empire had been involved in it.

*Support for
Mr. Hughes'
attitude*

LORD READING thought that it would be lamentable if the result of the friendly discussions which had taken place was to convey the impression that President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George were acutely divided. He fully agreed that we could not give up our claims on any matter without fighting, but he did hope that we should not lightly abandon the position that, consistently with the maintenance of our rights, our main object was to bring about the closest co-operation hereafter between ourselves and the United States.

LORD CURZON explained that he placed as much reliance on the future co-operation of Great Britain and the United States as any member of the Imperial War Cabinet. All he had meant to imply was that at the Conference Mr. Lloyd George would go with an authority fully equal, and indeed superior, to that of President Wilson.

MR. CHURCHILL considered that the only point of substance was to induce the United States to let us off the debt we had contracted with them, and return us the bullion and scrip we had paid over, on the understanding that we should do the same to the Allies to whom we had made advances. If President Wilson were prepared to do that, we might go some way towards meeting his views in the matter of indemnity. For the rest, we should be civil and insist on our essential points.

SIR ROBERT BORDEN said that he would regret if we entered on the Peace Conference with any feeling of antagonism towards President Wilson or the United States. He considered that the recent conversations had, on the whole, been as favourable as he had anticipated. Future good relations between ourselves

*Sir Robert
Borden's
views*

and the United States were, as he had said before, the best asset we could bring home from the war. With regard to the two points on which there had been a pronounced difference, namely the Pacific Islands and indemnity, there was no reason to conclude that we had yet got the President's final point of view. He agreed that with regard to these we should maintain our position strongly. He wished, however, to make clear that if the future policy of the British Empire meant working in co-operation with some European nation as against the United States, that policy could not reckon on the approval or the support of Canada. Canada's view was that as an Empire we should keep clear, as far as possible, of European complications and alliances. This feeling had been immensely strengthened by the experience of the war, into which we had been drawn by old-standing pledges and more recent understandings, of which the Dominions had not even been aware. He was in no sense reproaching the Imperial Government with regard to the past, and admitted—in answer to a question by Mr. Lloyd George—that since the Imperial War Cabinet had been set up the Dominions had not been committed to any treaty binding upon them without their knowledge.

With regard to Russia, he did not see how the war could be regarded as terminated if we left the Peace Conference with five or six nations and Governments still fighting in Russia. There were only two alternatives: one was to go and forcibly intervene in Russia itself; the other, which he preferred, was to induce the Governments of the various States in Russia to send representatives to Paris for conference with the Allied and associate nations. These could then bring pressure, if necessary, upon

them to restrain and control aggression, and to bring about conditions of stable government under the power and influence of the League of Nations.

LORD ROBERT CECIL expressed his agreement with Sir Robert Borden's suggestion concerning Russia. He admitted that there were certain difficulties in dealing with the Bolshevik Government, but thought they were not insuperable. He suggested that all parties in Russia should be told to stand fast where they were till the Peace Conference was over, and that meanwhile Allied Commissions might clear up many disputed points in the situation.

LORD MILNER suggested that, if Lord Robert Cecil's proposal were accepted, there was no reason why all the Governments in Russia, including even the Bolsheviks, should not be invited to the Peace Conference. If the Bolsheviks really accepted the conditions and stopped their aggression upon their neighbours, they would, in fact, have begun to cease being Bolsheviks.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE agreed, but pointed out that it would be necessary to stop aggression by General Denikin and the Siberian Government upon the Bolsheviks, and that measures might have to be taken at the Peace Conference to prevent the Bolsheviks using it for the purposes of propaganda.

LORD ROBERT CECIL said that he agreed with Mr. Hughes' view that the Empire would go into the Peace Conference in a position of enormous power, which, however, was also a position of prodigious responsibility. The vital thing was to secure a settled peace. The greatest guarantee of that was a good understanding with the United States, and that good understanding could not be secured unless we

were prepared to adhere to the idea of the League of Nations. He agreed that the details of the League of Nations could not be settled at the beginning of the Peace Conference, but the general principles might be laid down as early as possible. His own idea would be that the Peace Conference should at the outset pass, say, three resolutions, laying down: firstly the desirability of a League of Nations; secondly the general functions of such a League; and thirdly the Powers which at present could be trusted to take part in it, the elaborating of these resolutions to be referred to a technical Commission, which could be working at the matter while the Conference was sitting. In answer to a question by Sir J. Cook, he agreed that indemnity and other main terms of peace would have to be settled by the Peace Conference itself, and could not be left to the League of Nations."

This account of the Buckingham Palace conversations with the President produced a worse impression on the minds of the Cabinet than the actual interview had on mine. Mr. Hughes' mordant comments on the speech are an indication of the immediate effect it produced on the Imperial Cabinet. The Cabinet were much impressed with the critical power of the Hughes speech. It was their first explanation of the reason why this man of frail physique, defective hearing and eccentric gesticulations had attained such a position of dominant influence in the Australian Commonwealth. It was a fine specimen of ruthless and pungent analysis of President Wilson's claim to dictate to the countries that had borne the brunt of the fighting. I wish there had been a verbatim report which would reproduce the stabbing

Mr. Hughes' critical vigour

sentences in the form in which they were delivered. As it is I am only able to give an incomplete summary.

Before the deliberations of the Imperial War Cabinet on the instructions to be given to our delegates at the Peace Congress came to an end, the representation to be accorded to the Dominions at the Conference was discussed.

7. DOMINION REPRESENTATION

The Dominions were perturbed by the inadequate representation accorded to them at the table of the Conference by the French proposals, and they invited a decision upon the subject from the Imperial Cabinet. It was very difficult to induce foreign countries to understand the position which the Dominions occupied inside the British Empire. In foreign affairs, the Foreign Office in London constituted the executive and spokesman of the Empire, and therefore it was not unnatural that the friendliest Powers should assume that when a Peace Treaty came to be negotiated the British Government would represent the views, not merely of Great Britain, but of the whole Empire, just as the Quai d'Orsay represented the mind of France on foreign affairs. None of them quite realised that each of these Dominions was completely independent of any direction or control from Downing Street; that decision as to whether they would take part in a war in which Britain was engaged was entirely their own, and not subject to any order received from the British Government. They appreciated only vaguely, if at all, the fact that of the million men who crossed the seas from these remote territories, not one would have come in obedience to a command issued from Whitehall.

It was the events of the War that began to bring home to the French and Americans the essential difference between the structure of the French Empire or of the United States on the one hand and the British Empire on the other. France could levy and command armies in Algeria, and the Federal Government in the state of New York, by orders issued respectively from Paris or Washington—but a decree issued in London could not raise a platoon in Canada. When I was Secretary of State for War in 1916, a special effort was made to raise more troops at home and throughout the Empire. Communications to the Dominions were couched in the form not of a direction to the Governor to take the necessary steps to secure recruits, but as an appeal to the Prime Ministers of the respective Dominions, calling attention to the grave emergency, urging the need and entreating their assistance in view of that need. Their decision in August, 1914, to throw their resources of men and material on the side of Britain was as much their own as was that of the United States of America in April, 1917. The part they had played in the struggle had been a notable one. Some of the most brilliant victories on every battlefield, East and West, had been largely due to the valour of their troops. They therefore felt that they were entitled to an official recognition of the part they played by at least equal representation with Allied nations who had not contributed anything comparable to their great efforts. They were thus incensed at what they regarded as the unfair and humiliating representation which the French proffered to them at a Conference which would effect a settlement of world affairs made possible largely by their sacrifice. The change which the appearance of these formidable warriors, levied and equipped by their own Governments

and fighting under their own commanders for the first time on the battlefields of Europe and Asia, had achieved in the status of the Dominions was not quickly understood even by British statesmen.

During the first two and a half years of the War the Dominions were not called to our councils to assist in the direction of the War. The first time they were invited to sit at the same table as British Ministers on equal terms at the Great Council Chamber of the Empire was when I set up the Imperial War Cabinet in February, 1917, and sent an official invitation to the Prime Ministers of the Dominions to join it. The meetings were no formal and perfunctory make-believe Sanhedrims of the elders and chief priests of the Empire, to give an appearance of consultation. There was a genuine discussion of all questions of policy bearing on the direction of the War, and decisions were taken which affected the conduct of the War and the settlement of the peace. But the Victorian attitude of Britain's hegemony still lingered.

It seemed as though the French and Americans harboured a slight suspicion that this plea of Dominion independence and separate nationhood was an artifice of the wily Englishman to increase his representation at the Congress. *Suspicion of British plot to weight the Conference* Foreigners always suspect us of advancing the most altruistic principles for any scheme that promotes British interests. All Empires have that knack. The French compromised by according separate representation, but on a scale which placed the Dominions below the rank of States that had contributed much less to the victory. Hence the indignation of the Dominion Premiers.

The question was raised by Mr. Hughes at the last meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet in the year 1918.

"MR. HUGHES said that, under the French proposals, the Dominions would not be accorded representation equivalent to, say, Sweden. He called particular attention to the second of the two phases proposed, which referred to the eventual organisation of the League of Nations. If the League of Nations were to endure, it would be one of those questions at the Conference which would most vitally concern the Dominions. It was probable that in 25 years the white population of the British Empire overseas would exceed the population of Great Britain. He therefore suggested that, when the Conference discussed this question, the Dominions were entitled to representation equal to that accorded to neutrals. Australia had put and kept more men in the field than Belgium, and deserved as much representation at the Conference.

In reply to this, MR. LLOYD GEORGE pointed out that at a meeting on December 2, 1918, at which M. Clemenceau and Signor Orlando were present, it had been agreed by the representatives of the British, French, and Italian Governments:—

	‘Inter-Allied Conference of each of the great
	Allied and Associated Powers,
<i>Dominions</i>	namely:—
<i>place in plan</i>	France,
<i>agreed with</i>	Great Britain,
<i>Clemenceau</i>	Italy,
	Japan,
	United States of America.

Representatives of the British Dominions and India should attend as additional members of the British delegation when questions directly affecting them are under consideration.’

MR. LLOYD GEORGE pointed out that the Dominions and India would be in the same position as, if not better than, the smaller Allied Powers, because it had been agreed at the same meeting:—

‘That the smaller Allied Powers should have no right of representation at all the meetings of the Inter-Allied Conferences but that any of the smaller Allied Powers should have the right to be represented whenever questions concerning them were being discussed.’

In all discussions on the subject, it had been intended to include in the five delegates representing Great Britain, one representative of the Dominions and India.

SIR ROBERT BORDEN strongly urged that the question of representation had a very serious aspect for the Dominions, and a peculiar significance for Canada, which had no special material interest in the war, and no claims to additional territory. It would be regarded as intolerable in Canada that Portugal should have a representation in the Peace Conference which was denied to that Dominion. Canada had lost more men killed in France than Portugal had put into the field. If the French proposals were adopted as put forward in Lord Derby’s telegram, the result upon public opinion in Canada would be such as he did not care to suggest, or even contemplate. The status of the Dominions was not well understood by foreign Powers, and it would be not only proper, but necessary, for the British Government to set it forth fully. The British Empire had the right to define the powers and functions of the nations which compose it, and foreign Powers had

*Protest of
Sir Robert
Borden*

no right to question that definition. He alluded to the unanimous resolution passed in the Imperial War Conference in 1917, which was accepted by the British Government, and which declared that the constitution of the Empire was based on the principle of equal nationhood and adequate voice in foreign relations. Each Dominion should have as ample a representation as Belgium or Portugal. There was no question on which the people of Canada were more insistent than their claim to representation at the Peace Conference which would settle the issues of a war in which they had taken so notable a part. He hoped that the Cabinet would appreciate, although it was almost impossible for them fully to appreciate, the strong feeling in Canada on this subject. To provide that Canada should be called in only when her special interests were in question would be regarded as little better than a mockery. It would be most unfortunate from the point of view of the Dominions that the British delegation should be selected entirely from the British Isles. That delegation had authority to represent not only the British Isles, but the whole Empire. He therefore strongly urged that the delegation representing the British Empire should be in part selected from a panel, upon which each Prime Minister from the Dominions should have a place, and that one or more of those Prime Ministers should be called from time to time, as occasion might require, to sit in the delegation representing the whole Empire at the Conference.

LORD ROBERT CECIL agreed with Sir Robert Borden as to the wisdom of creating such a panel, and suggested that its members might serve on a kind of rota.

THE PRIME MINISTER, who also approved of the idea of the panel, said that the real business of the Peace Conference would be transacted not at the formal conferences, but at the small informal conversations. The Dominions and India would have the same representation as Serbia, Belgium, and Roumania. He considered, however, that it would be unwise to press for such a full representation of the British Empire at the first big conference, as five delegates from Great Britain and three each from the Dominions and India, because in that event there would be no fewer than twenty-three representatives of the British Empire at such meetings; and in attempting to get so full a representation we might run the risk of losing more than we gained.

The Imperial War Cabinet decided that:—

(a) Representatives of the British Dominions and India ought to be present at the opening session and at any other session of the Peace Conference or the Allied Preliminary Conference (should it be held) at which Belgium and other smaller Allied States were represented.

*Imperial
Cabinet's
decision*

(b) The British Dominions and India should in all respects have the same powers as, and be on an equal footing at the Conference with, Belgium and other smaller Allied States.

(c) Lord Robert Cecil should re-cast the telegram to Paris on these principles.

(d) The Prime Ministers of the Dominions and the representatives of India should be placed on a panel from which part of the *personnel* of the British delegation could be filled, according to the subject for discussion."

In the choice made by me of our colleagues to form the British Delegation at the Peace Congress, I acted on the principle suggested by Sir Robert Borden, of choosing one delegate out of the panel of Dominion Premiers

*Choosing the
British
delegation*

to make up the five to which we were entitled. The selection of the five was a difficult and delicate matter. We had to take into account the fact that we were a Coalition of political parties—mostly Conservative, but with a substantial Liberal contingent and a faithful remnant of Labour members representing a very large Labour and Trade Union vote cast for us at the Election. Mr. Bonar Law and I, as joint leaders of this Coalition, were necessarily selected. When vital decisions had to be taken, often without much opportunity for consultation with our colleagues, it was impossible to leave out the head of the Government or the leader of the largest party amongst its supporters. The Foreign Secretary, Mr. Balfour, both by virtue of his office, his experience and his fine intelligence, was indispensable. Mr. Barnes represented the views of organised Labour. His long association with the Trade Union Movement, the respect in which he was generally held by the workmen of the country for his integrity, unselfishness, sympathy and sound judgment, constituted him a distinguished representative of his class. The fifth vacancy was filled from the rota of Dominion Premiers.

Personally I should have liked to see Mr. Asquith on the Delegation. But which of the others could we have displaced to make room for him? Had he joined the Administration as Lord Chancellor, Mr. Bonar Law, with his usual readiness to suppress all personal claims, would have gladly surrendered his position on the

*Difficulty
of including
Mr. Asquith*

Delegation in favour of so eminent a member, especially as his presence in England was required as leader of the Commons. But the Conservatives would have resented his exclusion in order to substitute another Liberal, and thus have a representation of two Liberals and one Labour man to one Conservative. Had Mr. Asquith been a member of the Government, they might conceivably have made the sacrifice. But Mr. Asquith unfortunately refused that offer. And it would have been difficult to leave out Bonar Law and men like Lord Curzon and Lord Milner in order to find room for a political leader whose lead had been so emphatically repudiated by the people of this country.

CHAPTER III

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PEACE CONFERENCE

PREPARATIONS were made on an unprecedented scale by all the Departments concerned to assist the British delegation in its share of the tremendous task of world reconstruction. Both the Foreign Office and the War Office examined all their records and reports in order to give the delegation accurate information about the pre-War position under then existing Treaties, about the statistics showing the racial composition of countries involved in the settlement, claims put forward for independence by provinces annexed by force, or proposals by Allied States for readjustment of boundaries on principles laid down by the great countries during the War. Every demand and suggestion for change put forward by rival claimants was given the most careful examination. The Foreign Office dug deep into its archives for the long, varied and blood-stained history of fluctuating frontiers. The Treasury were prepared with their information and advice on all financial questions, the Board of Trade with theirs on all matters affecting trade, navigation and labour conditions. The Intelligence Organisations of the fighting services constituted a storehouse of information on the position of affairs in the vast areas covered by the War. The facts gathered by them during the War and in the period of occupation of conquered territories that followed, supplemented and

The Departments ransack their archives

checked the information in the possession of the Foreign Office on ethnical and economic questions and was invaluable when strategical considerations entered into the fixing of boundaries.

The judicious selection and co-ordination of all this information involved prolonged and immense labour by every Department. It was executed with a knowledge, freedom from bias and a breadth of view which reflected great credit on the intelligence and impartiality of our Civil Service in all its branches. The Departments were fully represented in Paris during the whole of the negotiations by their ablest officials, whose assistance and guidance the Peace negotiators constantly sought.

The British Delegation had to decide the question of whether the arrangements for the Conference itself should be given to the Foreign Office or to the Secretariat of the War Cabinet. Lord Hardinge was at the head of the Foreign Office organisation in Paris. He was a man of unrivalled experience. He possessed a calm, clear and unprejudiced judgment which gave to his advice an authority which was invaluable. On the other hand, there were other Departments whose advice had to be sought on the most controverted subjects in the Treaty—such as reparations, the military and naval clauses, labour conditions, the German colonies. Most important of all was the keeping in contact and consultation with Dominion representatives. The Secretary of the Cabinet, Sir Maurice Hankey, had been in close touch with the Dominion Premiers and with the various Departments at home during the whole of the War, and he had been present at all the discussions which took place in 1917 and 1918 on the terms of peace. It was therefore decided to

*Sir Maurice
Hankey ap-
pointed Secre-
tary of Peace
Delegation*

appoint Sir Maurice Hankey as Secretary to the British delegation at the Conference. Lord Hardinge accepted that decision with an unreserved loyalty worthy of his magnanimous and unselfish nature.

M. Clemenceau, as President of the Conference, nominated to the position of General Secretary of the Peace Congress M. Dutasta, a young man whose affability and tact made the appointment acceptable to all and helped to carry the proceedings through to the end without any friction on points of procedure. Dutasta did not, however, possess the necessary experience to discharge the day-to-day functions of a Conference entrusted with an infinite variety of gigantic problems. It was soon discovered that there was only one man who possessed the necessary qualifications for such a position. Whenever there was any difficulty experienced in the arrangement of the proceedings, in the disentanglement of various topics and in the arrangement of the procedure, it was always Sir Maurice Hankey who came to the rescue. Every member of the Conference was impressed with the fact that he had made a profound study of all the issues and that all the relevant facts were at his finger ends. He generally brought with him to the meetings a load of documents, and when there was a discussion upon any subject where there was a difference of view, Sir Maurice Hankey could put his hand without the slightest difficulty upon a document which cleared up all the obscurities. Gradually the President of the Council began to depend upon him and turn to him whenever there was any confusion which could be cleared up by a paper that could be regarded by everyone as conclusive. No other delegation secretary had the same mastery of all the relevant facts, or counted as much in

*His supreme
efficiency*

these matters. Sir Maurice Hankey's word was final on questions of fact. M. Clemenceau was very devoted to M. Dutasta, but that made him all the readier to take advantage of the services of someone who would avert the delays and the confusions for which the General Secretary might have been blamed. In the end, M. Clemenceau treated Sir Maurice Hankey as the actual Secretary, and when any question arose about which we were not very clear, he turned to the British Secretary and said: "Where is that bag of yours?", and the decisive document was soon forthcoming. Gradually, with some stiffness at first, but with complete acceptance at last, President Wilson took M. Clemenceau's lead in this respect, and when the Council of Four was constituted, Sir Maurice Hankey became the sole Secretary and kept all the minutes.

At first progress was slow and the discussions were inclined to be rambling and desultory. We were all feeling our way, and I had a sense that we were each of us trying to size up our colleagues, reconnoitring their respective positions, ascertaining their aims and how they stood in reference to the desiderata in which each of them was most deeply interested and involved.

The first few meetings at Paris on the Peace settlement were composed of representatives of Britain, France, Italy and the United States of America. These were purely sittings of the Supreme Inter-Allied Council. Japan was invited to join. The time was occupied in determining the numbers and allocation of the delegates at the Peace Congress, and their classification into those who should attend every meeting and those who were to be brought in when some issue arose which specially affected their respective countries. A

*Preliminary
problems
of the
Conference*

second question which occupied a good deal of our time was publicity; and the third was whether Russia should be invited to send delegates to the Peace Conference, and if not, how she should be dealt with. Each of these questions necessarily absorbed much time. The first was not so easy to determine. It was agreed that the main duty of drafting the Treaty must be left to the Great Powers and submitted to the others for their approval. Had all the Allied nations been represented, the Congress would have been merely a debating society, and for at least a year it could not have come to a definite decision on all, if any, of the vast and varied issues which had to be determined. The main burden of the War had fallen on the Great Powers and the victory was almost exclusively theirs. Without their intervention the little nations would have been trampled to the ground and would have had to accept such terms as the conqueror vouchsafed to them. If Germany had rejected the terms, it would have been the Armies of the Great Powers that would have had to enforce the settlement to the utmost of their capacity. But the small Powers had made their contribution and some of them had endured sacrifices and sufferings greater than even those to which the Great Powers had been subjected; and they were entitled to a voice in the peace settlement. We had to decide the numbers which should be given to each of the Allied countries who were not in the rank of Great Powers: and whether the numbers should be fixed on the basis of population or of the contribution made to the struggle by each. China had a population of 400 millions; the assistance she rendered was insignificant compared to the efforts and sacrifices of Serbia, Belgium, Roumania or of Canada and the other British Dominions.

On behalf of the Dominions I pressed for a better representation and a higher rank than that which had been accorded to them in the proposals submitted to the Supreme Council by France after consultation with the United States of America. I proposed that each of the Dominions and India should have two representatives and Newfoundland one, and I claimed that they should have the same status as Belgium and Serbia as countries which should be called in on questions which affected them. President Wilson certainly had no feeling of hostility or jealousy towards the Dominions. He entertained a warm feeling of friendship towards Canada in particular. But he felt bound to enter a mild protest against my proposal, no doubt because he realised the difficulties that anything which looked like a doubling or trebling of the representatives of the British Empire might cause in America. I urged the independent nationhood of the Dominions and the enormous assistance which they had rendered in men and material to the Allied cause throughout the struggle. I pointed out that Canada and Australia had each of them lost as many men as the United States of America, and I quoted a remark made that day to me by Sir Robert Borden that "if he returned to Canada and confessed that Canada was getting merely half the number of representatives that had been allotted to Serbia, Roumania, or Belgium, there would be a feeling that they were being badly treated, especially when it was known that the Canadian losses during the War had been greater than those of Belgium." At last I accepted an amendment by President Wilson that Canada and Australia, South Africa and India should each have two representatives, New Zealand one and that Newfoundland should not be given separate

*My fight for
Dominion
representation*

representation. All other questions of representation were amicably settled; at least the settlement was an agreed one as far as the Great Powers were concerned. One or two of the more persistent little States continued to grumble—but outside the Conference room.

There was one interesting sidelight on the foreign relations of the United States with her American neighbours when Costa Rica claimed a representative and President Wilson declined to sit at the same table as a Costa Rican delegate. He said that:—

*Wilson's
feud with
Costa Rica*

“When he first became President, revolutions had been fomented in Central America by people desirous of supplying arms and munitions, and anxious to obtain concessions. He had then issued a Note to the effect that the United States of America would not accept any Government formed for the purpose of furthering the ambitions of an individual. An example of this had occurred in Mexico, and for that reason America had refused to recognise Carranza. Later on, a similar instance had occurred in Costa Rica and the United States of America had refused to recognise the new ruler of that country. Costa Rica had made many attempts, without success, to renew relations with the United States of America. With this object in view, she had first offered to declare war on Germany and, finally, receiving no reply to these overtures, had actually declared war in order to force the United States of America to recognise her. In these circumstances he could not bring himself to sit at the same table as a Representative of Costa Rica. Naturally, if any question directly affecting Costa Rica should come up for discussion he would be prepared to reconsider his decision, but

under present conditions he proposed that Costa Rica should not be represented at the Peace Conference."

The question of the publicity to be given from day to day to our deliberations occupied a great many sittings. There were swarms of newspaper correspondents from every part of the world clamouring for copy. As the eyes of the world were concentrated on this great assembly of the nations, which was to decide such momentous issues for the future of so many individual nations and for humanity as a whole, it was expected that each of these journalists should send daily messages to their respective papers as to the progress of events. On the other hand, there was a very strong feeling inside the Conference room that if the discussions were published each day before any decision had been arrived at, it would interfere materially with our efforts to reconcile differences and to arrive at a common understanding. It was pointed out that if it were known that the delegates of some particular country were putting up a fight on some special question on which opinion in that country took a somewhat different view from that which obtained in other Allied countries, it would be difficult for either side to give in or to compromise without an appearance of surrender. Ultimately, after consultations between the delegates, and by the delegates with the representatives of their own Press, an agreement was reached which on the whole and with a few notable exceptions worked very well throughout the whole of the Conference. There was no dearth of copy for the journalists. Nothing was withheld from the public which it was imperative they should know, and which had they known earlier would have caused them to insist upon a change in any of our

*The great
publicity
problem*

decisions. On the other hand there were no premature and mischievous revelations (which often meant exaggerations) of the differences which often arose, and were bound to arise, in the discussions on the issues great and small which we had to determine before the draft Treaty could be formulated. My views on the question of premature publicity of our deliberations were thus summarised by the official note taken:—

“If at every stage of the discussion public and parliamentary agitation had to be pacified the discussions might be prolonged *ad infinitum*. What he (Mr. Lloyd George) wished to avoid was a Peace settled by public clamour. He had just had the experience of an election in England, during which the public was beginning to ask embarrassing questions concerning peace. Had the election lasted longer he might have come to the Conference with his hands tied by pledges, and deprived of his freedom of action. He wished to remain free to be convinced. If there were daily reports of the discussions, as soon as the representative of any country yielded on a point that he had maintained on the previous day there would be headlines in the Press: ‘Great Britain is betrayed,’ or ‘France is betrayed.’ . . . At a later stage it would be possible to show to the public that, if this or that had been conceded, other advantages had been obtained. He was not afraid of facing the Press, when its demands were unreasonable. The Press was well aware that it was excluded from proceedings of Cabinets. This was a Cabinet of the nations. Furthermore, the enemy must not know beforehand what our decisions were, and still less what our differences were. Dangerous agitations might be aroused

*Need to avoid
peace by
clamour*

even in our own countries by premature publication of news, and he pointed out that in France and Italy the elections had not yet taken place."

I was specially anxious not to excite public opinion on the question of Reparations, concerning which such extravagant estimates had been formed by men who had a high standing as financial experts. Clemenceau was also anxious to avoid agitation in the French Press and Chamber on this question as well as on the vexed issue of the Rhineland.

Both the British Press and the delegates were very fortunate in the person who was selected with the consent of both to act as liaison between British journalists and the Delegation—
Good work of Lord Riddell Lord Riddell. He was a highly prosperous newspaper proprietor, whose journal did not compete with any of the daily journals, and therefore excited no jealousy or suspicion in that quarter. He was a man of exceptionally genial accost, who was on good terms with most politicians of all parties and almost every newspaper owner in the kingdom. He possessed tact, affability and ultimate firmness. He got on well with Northcliffe, whilst at the same time he was a friend of mine. That was in itself a tribute to his tact and dexterity. The success of the British Press arrangements at the Paris Conference were largely due to him. But they were also attributable to the type of journalist chosen by the British Press. They were amongst the best representatives of their order. When British Ministers came to know them, they felt the most implicit confidence in their patriotism and sense of honour. Nothing was given away which had been revealed to them in confidence for their guidance and not for publication.

CHAPTER IV

PRESIDENT WILSON AND COLONEL HOUSE

BEFORE proceeding to narrate the discussions and the business transacted at this historical conference, it might be well to give some idea of the personages who took a leading part in these transactions. In my War Memoirs I have already given my impressions of the veteran statesman who was President of the Conference, and also of Lord Balfour and Mr. Bonar Law.

All the European delegates were especially concerned to discover what President Wilson was like, what he was after and what he meant to insist upon. As to the rest of us, we had often met before and worked together harmoniously during the trials of the War.

President Wilson the unknown quantity We could not always agree, but the disagreements were national rather than personal. We could only act within the limits permitted by the opinions of the people we respectively represented. Their exigencies, their difficulties, their aims, traditions and prejudices had to be taken into account. We all understood that perfectly well and allowed for it in our judgment of the stand taken by others. Clemenceau, Orlando, Sonnino, Balfour and I had conferred, conversed and consulted times without number on all the most important issues with which we would be confronted at this Congress. Clemenceau and I had gone together through the dark and depressing events of the 1918 spring-time. Orlando, Sonnino and I had spent anxious days together restoring the

Italian front after the catastrophe of Caporetto, and we had all discussed round the same table unity of command during the winter and spring of 1918. We had also had many conversations on some of the main outlines of a peace settlement. But President Wilson none of us knew. He was the product, not, it is true, of a different world, but of another hemisphere. Whilst we were dealing every day with ghastly realities on land and sea, some of them visible to our own eyes and audible to our ears, he was soaring in clouds of serene rhetoric. When the Allied Armies were hard pressed and our troops were falling by the hundred thousand in vain endeavours to drive back our redoubtable foe, we could with difficulty even approach him to persuade him to view the grim struggle below, and to come down to earth to deal with its urgent demands before the accumulating slaughter should bury our cause in irreparable disaster. When he came to France, the French Government and people were anxious that he should visit the devastated areas so as to acquaint him with the demoniac actualities of war. He managed to elude their request and to ignore their hints right to the end. Once, under great pressure, he visited Rheims and, viewing the ruins that a few years ago were a glorious cathedral, congratulated the prelate on the edifice not being nearly as much defaced as he had expected to see it. He shunned the sight or study of unpleasant truths that diverted him from his foregone conclusions.

That is how Wilson appeared to those who met him for the first time, and they eyed him with a measure of suspicion not unmingled with apprehension. Clemenceau followed his movements like an old watchdog keeping an eye on a strange and unwelcome dog

*Wilson and
Clemenceau*

who has visited the farmyard and of whose intentions he is more than doubtful. There never was a greater contrast, mental or spiritual, than that which existed between these two notable men. Wilson with his high but narrow brow, his fine head with its elevated crown and his dreamy but untrustful eye—the make-up of the idealist who is also something of an egoist; Clemenceau, with a powerful head and the square brow of the logician—the head conspicuously flat topped, with no upper storey in which to lodge the humanities, the ever vigilant and fierce eye of the animal who has hunted and been hunted all his life. The idealist amused him so long as he did not insist on incorporating his dreams in a Treaty which Clemenceau had to sign. It was part of the real joy of these Conferences to observe Clemenceau's attitude towards Wilson during the first five weeks of the Conference. He listened with eyes and ears lest Wilson should by a phrase commit the Conference to some proposition which weakened the settlement from the French standpoint. If Wilson ended his allocution without doing any perceptible harm, Clemenceau's stern face temporarily relaxed, and he expressed his relief with a deep sigh. But if the President took a flight beyond the azure main, as he was occasionally inclined to do without regard to relevance, Clemenceau would open his great eyes in twinkling wonder, and turn them on me as much as to say: "Here he is off again!"

I really think that at first the idealistic President regarded himself as a missionary whose
The President's sermon function it was to rescue the poor European heathen from their age-long worship of false and fiery gods. He was apt to address us in that vein, beginning with a few simple

and elementary truths about right being more important than might, and justice being more eternal than force. No doubt Europe needed the lesson, but the President forgot that the Allies had fought for nearly five years for international right and fairplay, and were then exhausted and sore from the terrible wounds they had sustained in the struggle. They were therefore impatient at having little sermonettes delivered to them, full of rudimentary sentences about things which they had fought for years to vindicate when the President was proclaiming that he was too proud to fight for them. Those who suggest that anyone sitting at that table resented President Wilson's exalted principles are calumniating the myriads who died for those ideals. We were just as truly there to frame a treaty that would not dishonour their memory as was the President of the United States.

There was a memorable meeting where President Wilson's homiletic style provoked from Clemenceau one of his most brilliant replies. It arose over the question of the restoration to France of the 1814 frontier of the Saar Valley. The Allied Powers, including Britain, Prussia, Russia and Austria, had after Napoleon's overthrow in 1814 determined the North-Eastern frontiers of France in such a way as to give to the French a part of the Saar Valley. Clemenceau pleaded for the restoration of a frontier thus accorded to France in the hour of complete defeat. President Wilson retorted "that was a hundred years ago—a hundred years is a very long time." "Yes," said Clemenceau, "a very long time in the history of the États-Unis." Wilson then diverged into his usual rhapsody about the superiority of right to might: he referred to those great French idealists—Lafayette

*Clemenceau's
retorts*

and Rochambeau—whose names were held in immortal honour in the United States; and he ended an eloquent appeal to Clemenceau by quoting Napoleon's saying on his deathbed that "in the end right always triumphed over might." Clemenceau did not reply in English, of which he had a considerable mastery, but as was his invariable practice when he had something to say to which he attached importance, sent for an interpreter and then replied in French. He said: "President Wilson has quoted Napoleon as having said that in the end might was beaten by right. He says that he uttered this sentiment on his deathbed. Had it been true it was rather late for him to have discovered it. But it was not true. President Wilson alluded in glowing language to those idealistic young Frenchmen who helped to liberate America. However exalted the ideals of Lafayette and Rochambeau, they would never have achieved them without force. Force brought the United States into being and force again prevented it from falling to pieces." The President acknowledged the cogency of the reply.

But his most extraordinary outburst was when he was developing some theme—I rather think it was connected with the League of Nations—which led him to explain the failure of Christianity to achieve its highest ideals. "Why," he said, "has Jesus Christ so far not succeeded in inducing the world to follow His teachings in these matters? It is because He taught the ideal without devising any practical means of attaining it. That is the reason why I am proposing a practical scheme to carry out His aims." Clemenceau slowly opened his dark eyes to their widest dimensions and swept them round the assembly to see how the Christians gathered around the table enjoyed this exposure of the futility of their Master.

Gradually we rubbed along to a better understanding of each other; we learned to make allowance for difference of tradition, antecedents, *Accommodation reached by degrees* temperament and environment. This was President Wilson's first contact with Europe and its tangled and thorny jungle, for ages the favourite hunting ground of beasts of prey and poisonous reptiles springing and creeping on their victims. He discovered that he could not judge this old Continent, with its feuds dating from a time when the historical memory of man fades into utter darkness, as he would the relations of America with Mexico. Ancient races have been exterminated in America and their quarrels and wrongs have been buried with them. Emigration has settled the disputes about the righteousness of the conquests of Texas and California. The Rio Grande has not the tragic memories of the Rhine. There are no chronicles which record the savageries perpetrated on the banks of the Rio Grande. The annals of the sanguinary feuds provoked by centuries of watch on the Rhine by Teuton, Gaul and Roman are still preserved. On the other hand, we accepted the fact that the remoteness of America from the scene of our endless conflicts enabled her to take a more detached and therefore a calmer view of the problems upon the solution of which we were engaged

When a man provokes angry controversy at^u himself, his theories and his actions, and when it c^r *Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt compared* tinues years after his death, then it is safe to assume that he was an arresting personality. I visited the States some years ago and came across many men and women in many States who accorded to Wilson a reverence which is reserved only for the most venerated amongst the saints of the calendar. On the other hand, I met

a great number to whom I dared not mention his name because of the fury it engendered. It was as great a breach of good manners to mention him in certain circles as it would be to introduce the name of the Devil in refined society. A man who excited such a clash of passion in his day and after his day was done must have been a man of striking and powerful individuality.

What kind of man was he? With friends and foes alike his personality unbalanced judgment. How did he impress those who for the first time came into close personal contact with him without possessing any definite preconceived ideas, whether prejudices or predilections, about him? To that class I belonged. His stern and dauntless Radicalism always appealed to me. He was disliked by Wall Street and feared by millionaires. I had not myself been a particular pet of financiers or of the ultra-rich, except perhaps when they were in dire distress at the beginning of the War and they needed my help to extricate them from their troubles. I admired his oratory—his phrases which were like diamonds, clear cut, brilliant, if hard. On the other hand, I am not enamoured of doctrinaires who shrink from the audacious action which alone can make effective the far-reaching doctrines which they preach. Here I did not think him comparable to his great rival Theodore Roosevelt, who curbed the oppression of concentrated wealth by measures which made him hated by the rich right up to and beyond the tomb. "How is it," said the great progressive, "that whenever I mention the Eighth Commandment, there is a panic in Wall Street?" The answer was: because he applied that Mosaic precept to some of the most profitable transactions of the more rapacious in that potent fraternity. The Wilson action was more

hesitant and timorous. He did not hit as hard or as direct as the famous Bull Moose at the weak spots of the beasts of prey who infested the American financial jungle. That defect characterised Wilson's conduct before and after the War. He had an implicit faith in the efficacy of phrases. Diamond does not break glass; its impress has to be followed by adequate pressure.

When I first encountered Wilson it was with mixed feelings. I certainly felt no hostility towards him but

*My liking
for Wilson* I was very curious to know what he was like. At our first meeting at Charing Cross Station, the frankness of his countenance

and the affability and almost warmth of his greeting won my goodwill and, as far as I was concerned, he never lost it. I sat opposite to him for months in the same small Parisian room. I conversed with him repeatedly in private, and I broke bread with him on a few occasions. I therefore had all the opportunity that anyone could desire for forming an estimate of this notable and towering figure in his day. The favourable personal impression made on my mind by our first handshake was deepened by my subsequent meetings. He was even-tempered and agreeable. He had the charm which emanates from a fine intelligence, integrity of purpose and a complete absence of querulousness or cantankerousness. He was stiff, unbending, uncommunicative, but he was pleasant almost to the confines of geniality.

When the Congress was drawing to a close, Clemenceau asked me in his abrupt manner: "How do you like Wilson?" I replied: "I like him, and I like him very much better now than I did at the beginning." "So do I," said the Tiger. No three men, cooped together for so many months discussing momentous issues bristling with controversial

points, ever got on better or more agreeably together than did Clemenceau, Wilson and I. To quote M. Tardieu in his book, "The Truth about the Treaty": "despite divergencies of opinion, the personal relations between the three men during those forty days have never ceased to be sincere, calm and affectionate. May their fellow countrymen never forget it!" I gladly endorse this testimony to the good feeling, goodwill and—towards the end—the really affectionate relations that existed between the three men who took the leading part in deciding the lines upon which the Versailles Treaty should be framed. When I criticise Wilson it will be with genuine personal regret. It will be attributable to my resolve to write a truthful narrative as to events and persons without reference to my own personal inclinations.

*Pleasant
relations
of the
"Big Three"*

He was a most interesting but not a very difficult study. There were no obscurities or subtleties in his character—at least none that an average student of human nature could not decipher without much difficulty.

All men and women have dual natures. But Wilson was the most clear-cut specimen of duality that I have ever met. The two human beings of which he was constituted never merged or mixed. They were separate and distinct contrasts but nevertheless on quite good terms with each other. It is not that he had feet of clay. He stood quite firmly on his feet unless he was pushed over entirely. But there were lumps of pure unmixed clay here and there amidst the gold in every part of his character. And both were genuine. There was nothing false or sham about him. The gold was sterling and the clay was honest marl, and they were both visible to the naked eye. He was the most extraordinary

*Wilson's
dual
character*

compound I have ever encountered of the noble visionary, the implacable and unscrupulous partisan, the exalted idealist and the man of rather petty personal rancours.

Most men—perhaps all men in a greater or less degree—are an inextricable mixture of good and evil motives and impulses, some noble, some base. Wilson was no exception. He was *Badly mixed* not only a mixture, but he was badly mixed. There must be sand in all concrete: character depends on the proportions of the sand to the cement and on the way they are mixed together. On the one hand there was his idealism and his undoubted integrity. On the other there were his personal hatreds, his suspiciousness, his intolerance of criticism and his complete lack of generosity towards men who dared to differ from him. The result was that at one moment you seemed to come up against a fine strong character which was a solid pillar upon which you could rest the weight of any cause, however momentous; the next moment you found patches of rather poor stuff in his attitude and actions which destroyed your confidence and your respect. This was the President Wilson we were expecting in London, and with whom we had to discuss the terms of peace on the official assumption that he was speaking the mind of America and that what he said would receive the full endorsement of the great country of which he was the Chief Magistrate.

But Wilson's duality obtruded itself more and more as the Congress proceeded. It was registered in his face, and any practised physiognomist could readily detect the imprint. There was the lofty brow of the idealist, there was the fine eye now shining with righteous passion, now remote and distrustful and hard

with suspicion; one moment faith kindling into a prophetic glow, the next moment flaming from personal dislike into hatred.

There never were greater contrasts so conspicuously displayed in the same person without any effort at concealment. He rose naturally and without effort to great heights. He descended just as easily to the depths. Spiritually he dwelt above the snow line high above his fellows in an atmosphere pure, glistening and bracing, but cold. Suddenly he was precipitated like an avalanche into the swamps of petty personal or party malignity down below. His was rather an ecclesiastical than a political type of mind. He had high ideals and honestly held them as a faith with a religious fervour. He believed all he preached about human brotherhood and charity towards all men. Nevertheless he was a bigoted sectarian who placed in the category of the damned all those who belonged to a different political creed and excluded them for ever from charitable thought or destiny. His radiant charity towards mankind turned to flame when it came into contact with heretics.

He was also vigilantly jealous of all who seemed to dispute or even impinge upon his authority. He would not share or delegate the minutest particle of power.

His face was contorted with an unsightly hatred if you mentioned the names of two or three eminent Republicans who had criticised him or his policies. I shall always remember with a horrified pang the interview I had with him on the day when the news came of Theodore Roosevelt's sudden death. The late Mr. Wickersham had forwarded to me in Paris a letter of introduction written by Mr. Roosevelt from his sick

*Hatred of
Theodore
Roosevelt*

bed. It was placed in my hand just after I had received the tragic news of his sudden death. I was naturally shocked, for I had a great admiration and liking for this great dynamic personality. I had been about to leave for a meeting at the President's house, and as soon as I entered Mr. Wilson's room I expressed my sorrow. I was aghast at the outburst of acrid detestation which flowed from Wilson's lips. He was a man of burning animosities—against persons as well as principles—and he took no trouble to conceal either. There was nothing of the hypocrite in his composition. I would not like to suggest that there is less reticence observed in the States on these occasions than in the Old World. There is the story of a famous American politician who, on being asked whether he proposed to attend the funeral of a rival whom he cordially detested, replied: "No, but I thoroughly approve of it!"

Unconsciously Wilson copied Lincoln—his stories, his vivid phrases, his human appeal. In spite of this unconscious imitation there never were

*Contrast with
Lincoln*

two men who offered so complete a contrast in intellect and character. Lincoln's wit and humour were the natural flow of a gay and genial temperament and of a keen sense of the merry as well as the ridiculous. Wilson had no humour and his wit was synthetic. Wilson was a man of outstanding ability, highly cultivated and polished; Lincoln was a man of genius. Lincoln had the practical common sense of a son of the soil. He was intensely human and therefore hated war with its abominable cruelty. Above all his heart was tortured with the thought that he had to kill and maim and starve and deny medicaments to tens of thousands of his own fellow-countrymen, and he did his best to avert it. I once read a biography of Lincoln which gave photo-

graphs of this resolute but warm-hearted humanitarian at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the Civil War. By the last act of the tragedy anguish had chiselled deep furrows in his brow and countenance. Gaiety had been chased from the humorous eyes, and deep sadness and grief reigned in their depths. But once war was declared he went all legitimate lengths to achieve victory for what he conceived to be the cause of right. He did not haver and hesitate. He concentrated all his powerful mind on the most effective means and instruments for winning through. Wilson also abhorred the carnage and savagery of war: he also did his utmost to keep out of it: he also was driven by an irresistible current which he could not control to resort to it against his will, and after prolonged efforts to keep out of it. There the comparison ends and the contrast appears. When he finally committed himself to the struggle he did not, like Lincoln, put all his energies and abilities into preparing for battle. He continued to display his aversion to the war he had himself declared by failing to throw his strength of mind and will into its energetic prosecution.

He was genuinely humane, but he completely lacked the human touch of Lincoln. The hand was too frigid. It gave you the impression that Wilson's philanthropy was purely intellectual, whereas Lincoln's came straight from the heart.

There has been a vast amount of discussion as to whether Wilson ought ever to have crossed the Atlantic and to have taken personal part in the deliberations of the Peace Conference. Opinion has now definitely settled down on the side of declaring that it was a grave error of judgment. That opinion is by no means confined to Wilson's detractors. I cannot say that I took

*His attendance
at the Peace
Conference
a mistake*

that view at the time. I was delighted to have an opportunity of meeting him and of entering into a heart-to-heart discussion with this remarkable man on problems affecting the settlement of the world. I am now convinced that his personal attendance at the Conference was a mistake. It would undoubtedly have been better if he had chosen a mixed team of Democrats and Republicans to represent his views. He would have wielded much greater authority and achieved his own purpose more surely. A cable from the President of the United States intimating that he disapproved of some particular proposition and that, if it were inserted in the Treaty, he could not sign it, would have made it much easier for the French and British representatives to persuade their respective publics to accept modifications. But it was essential that the delegation appointed should not merely be men of capacity and influence, but also persons in whom the President trusted, and unfortunately he was not of a trustful disposition. His pervasive suspiciousness was his most disabling weakness. He believed in mankind but he distrusted all men. Trustful natures encounter many hurtful disappointments in life, but they get more out of it than do the suspicious. Co-operation with their fellow men is to the former a constant joy; to the latter it is a perpetual worry. With ordinary prudence, vigilance and insight the former get the best help from the best helpers; the latter only get an uneasy and grudging service from the second best. The higher types respond to confidence and are chilled by distrust. For that reason Wilson never rallied first-rate minds around him and he did not always succeed in retaining the second-rate. That is why he decided that his personal presence in Europe and at the table of the Congress was inevitable.

But the moment he appeared at our Councils, he was there on equal terms with the rest of us. His training had never qualified him for such a position. Whether as Principal of a College, as Governor of New Jersey, or President of the United States, he was always *primus*, not *inter pares* but amongst subordinates. He was not accustomed to confer with equals. He found it exceedingly difficult to adapt himself to that position. In the capacities he had filled he might have debated but he also decided. But when he came to the Peace Congress his decisions counted no more than those of the Prime Ministers with whom he conferred.

I had also an impression that this was the first occasion upon which he had entered into the rough and tumble of political life. He entered into politics late in life. Before he threw himself into the tumult and savageries of the political arena he had led a secluded and sheltered life as the Head of a College. As such he dwelt in a tranquil environment of implicit obedience from all who surrounded him and all who were subject to his rule. Outspoken criticism of the Principal was a breach of discipline. He was like an autocrat with a censored Press and a platform monopolised by himself and his subordinates. If you lead that kind of life well into middle-age, sensitive nerves are not hardened for the stinging and scorching arrows that burn and fester in the ruthless conflicts of a political career. Despite Wilson's apparent calm and his impassivity of countenance, almost Indian in its rigidity, he was an extremely sensitive man. The pride that prevented him from showing it made it all the more hurtful. There is no knowing what pain he suffered from the rancorous criticisms of his own opponents in America whilst he was engaged on his

*Unused to
political
rough and
tumble*

great task in Europe, or from the spiteful paragraphs and caricatures of the Parisian Press. Clemenceau and I had endured this kind of malignity all our days, so when the French Press attacked Clemenceau as a traitor for surrendering the rights of his own country, and both the French and English Press reviled me, neither of us lost a minute's sleep. There was nothing new in this experience for either of us. I once visited the snake farm at São Paulo, Brazil, where they have a shuddering collection of the most poisonous serpents in the Brazilian jungles. The head of the establishment explained to me how a few years ago these vipers destroyed thousands of horses and cattle every year, and something had to be done to protect the rancheros from their ravages. That was the origin of the snake farm. They were now able to inoculate the stock with a virus prepared out of the poisons extracted from snakes. A few injections in the horses or cattle when they were young made them immune. With the older animals it was rather late in life to begin the process. Old politicians like Clemenceau, and I claim the same for myself, had been from our early youth upwards working and hunting in the most snake-infested jungles that politics can provide. We had been bitten and stung many a time by every kind of poisonous reptile, and having survived so long we were now immune. But Wilson had led a protected life amongst well ordered and academic cloisters. There he had no stings to fear except from the insects which you cannot keep from buzzing in the best garnished edifice. Even against those he was carefully netted around, and therefore he had not been thoroughly inoculated by the experiences which had made the old horses of the political jungle indifferent to attack.

This accounts for his nervous and spiritual break-

down in the middle of the Conference. He was received in Paris on his first appearance with an organised adulation of applause in the streets and approbation in the Press which was intoxicating, and intended to inebriate. Streets were named after him, Senate and Chamber of Deputies gave him an official welcome, a palace was placed at his disposal, the picked regiments of France provided his escort and their best bands played him through the most impressive avenues of the city. Then came a blighting, withering blizzard of criticism and calumny. Wilson's self-confidence wilted and shrivelled under the ceaseless blast.

Many angry controversies have raged around his name in his own country, and they have not yet died down, so that it will be difficult there to secure a fair verdict on either side as to his rank amongst the rulers of America. But no one can doubt that he was a supremely able man. As to his character, outside the partisans who still hold him in detestation, those who met him in Europe, and had every opportunity of weighing and measuring his character, pay him the tribute of unreserved recognition of his sincerity as an idealist.

His last spurt of will-power and energy at the Congress he spent on a futile endeavour first to cajole and then to bully a gifted but hysterical Italian poet out of Fiume. The more clumsily he cooed or the more loftily he preached, the more vehemently did D'Annunzio gesticulate and orate defiance inside Fiume. After his pact with Clemenceau which protected Woodrow Wilson from the calumnious scribbles of the Parisian pen dipped in gall,¹ his interventions on the German Treaty were languid and his protests tepid. Things were not

*Criticism
broke him
down*

*A disillusioned
evangelist*

¹See chapter VIII.

shaping themselves on the lines of his dream. When he sailed for Europe he had a vision of arriving in the Old World as a New Messiah to save it from its predatory transgressions, and directing its feet along the paths of peace, righteousness and fraternity. The diverse races and traditions of America had been hammered partly in the fires of war into one people with one common national patriotism. Wilson thought he might persuade the warring tribes of Europe—no more numerous than those of the States—to weld into one fraternity whilst they were still soft and malleable after issuing from the glowing furnace of the Great War. He had a habit of beginning his admonitions to the statesmen of an old hemisphere whom he believed were steeped in the spirit of rapine: "Friends—for we are all friends here."

His experiences at the Peace Congress disclosed to him two disconcerting truths. One is a truth which has so often baffled all of us in life: that our greatest difficulties come not so much from deciding whether we should follow the dictates of a clear principle or not, but in choosing the particular principle which is most applicable to the facts, or in ascertaining accurately the particular facts upon which the principle is to be shaped. Thus President Wilson discovered that the chronic troubles of Europe could not be settled by hanging round its neck the phylacteries of abstract justice. He found that abstract principles did not settle frontiers so tangled historically and traditionally that no one could with certainty unravel the title to lands on either side. He found that strict justice required that compensation should be paid for all torts, but that strict insistence on a right which every civilised country recognised caused complications he was not prepared to face. Everywhere he found that decisions based on his conceptions of right

in 1923. It was shortly before his death. His health was then so precarious that his doctor warned me that the interview must be a short one. Physically he was a wreck. One side was paralysed, but the impairment to his powers of speech was not apparent. He was pleased to see me and his reception was cordial. He alluded with pleasure to his experiences at the Conference. Of Clemenceau he spoke in kindly terms. But when the name of Poincaré was mentioned, all the bitterness of his nature burst into a sentence of concentrated hatred. "He is a cheat and a liar," he exclaimed. He repeated the phrase with fierce emphasis. Poincaré disliked and distrusted him and the detestation was mutual. The name of Coolidge provoked another outburst. When I informed him that I had just left his successor at the White House, he asked me what I thought of him. I replied that I was not quite sure. He replied: "I will tell you what he is like. Oscar Wilde once saw a man who was giving himself great airs at a social function. He went up to him and putting on his eyeglass"—here Wilson took his glasses in his right hand and fixed them at his eye—"he said to him: 'Are you supposed to be anyone in particular?' Coolidge is no one in particular." Here was the old Wilson with his personal hatreds unquenched right to the end of his journey.

We shunned all reference to the League of Nations. The doctor signalled to me that the interview should be terminated. That is the last I saw of this extraordinary mixture of real greatness thwarted by much littleness.

Was he hero, saint or martyr? There was something of each in the struggles of the last years of his life and in the circumstances of his death, though not enough to warrant the claim made on his behalf to

any of these noble appellations. But that he honestly consecrated an upright character and a fine intellect to the service of mankind, no one will deny who is not afflicted with a party spirit so charged with rancour as to have become an insanity of the soul.

There was no man who played as active, continuous and useful a part in President Wilson's dealings with Europe as Colonel House. He was the *An implacable* Claudius of this pacific American Caesar. *Democrat* He was one of the most subtle and successful political managers of his day. His manœuvres were largely responsible for Wilson's ascent to the Presidential throne. A Democrat from the southernmost of the Southern States, he was drenched with all the Party fanaticism of that fierce breed. His natural suavity of demeanour and softness of speech concealed his real antipathy towards Republicans of all sorts and kinds. It was uncompromising and inexorable. I attributed Wilson's greatest blunder—the failure to take one or two of the more moderate and sympathetic Republican leaders with him to Paris—partly to House's encouragement of Wilson's instinctive dislike of all Republicans, if not to the actual counsel which he gave him to have nothing to do with any of them. But he was not only an intense Democrat; he was above all a devoted and devout Wilson democrat. Wilson was his idol, but his in the sense that it was House who had picked him out, shaped him as a politician, built the altar for him and placed him there above it to be worshipped. As a party leader Wilson was not the creator of House, but his creation. All the same there could be no doubt of House's genuine admiration and worship for what was the work of his own hands. He recognised that he had

chosen first-class timber. Judging from his Memoirs, he was under the impression that he not only chiselled and shaped the idol but also pulled the hidden strings that moved it. And he was ecstatically proud of it.

House was about the only man that Wilson really trusted amongst his associates and counsellors. He gave him that abnormal measure of confidence because House very adroitly gave Wilson the impression that the advice he gave was not his own but Wilson's idea.

*His tact in
handling
President
Wilson*

The President was exceptionally distrustful and full of lurking misgivings about men in general. He demanded the most exacting proofs of faith and attachment from all his subordinates. He was not satisfied with mere party loyalty. The incense offered must have a distinct aroma of personal adoration. House accorded it in full—not to say, fulsome—measure. Page, the well-beloved American Ambassador in London, was not a true worshipper; he was just a good Democrat at home and a faithful servant of his country in a foreign court—and no more. Hence his despatches on the course of events in England during the War were suspect and carried no weight in the White House. Secretary Lansing was a mere cypher—an amiable lawyer of good standing and of respectable abilities but of no particular distinction or definite personality. He just did what he was told, and was never told to do very much. He was not of the true faith; his "Memoirs" show that he had not assimilated into his system the Decree of Infallibility. But House had. So in foreign policy he became the trusted—and the only trusted—instrument and exponent of the President's ideas across the Atlantic. He visited Berlin, Paris and London during the War, saw every statesman who counted on either side and reported every

interview that he had to the great chief. When the Supreme Council met in Paris to discuss the terms of the Armistice and afterwards the arrangements for the Peace Conference, House, with no official status, was the acknowledged spokesman of the American Republic. I think there were other Americans present, but I have forgotten their names, for they did not matter and took no part in the discussions. The voice of House was the voice of Wilson. He cabled to the White House every day messages setting forth how he had stood up to the unregenerate Europeans for Wilson's high ideals. He told the President how all the Allied statesmen dreaded his appearance in person at the table of the Peace Congress, and were pleading that he should not come.

When the President arrived in Paris, I saw less and gradually less of House. I thought it better to deal

*Clemenceau's
use of
House* with Wilson direct. In spite of all that has been disseminated and believed to the contrary, I was more in sympathy with the President's ideas as to the main objectives

we ought to strive for in the peace settlement, and particularly as to the things we ought to avoid, than I was with Clemenceau's one aim of keeping Germany down feeble and fettered. Wilson soon came to understand my attitude and therefore he realised that no intermediary was required between him and me. On the other hand, the astute French Premier saw the value of getting at House and using his influence over Wilson to mollify and mould the too idealistic President into the right frame of mind on the French policy. House and Clemenceau saw a great deal of each other behind the scenes. Whenever there were difficulties Clemenceau got at House. It was House who negotiated the nefarious arrangement by which the French Press were to be induced to withdraw their disreput-

able campaign of slander and spite against the President in return for an assurance that Wilson would modify his objections to the French demands on their eastern frontiers. It was a fateful and in some respects a fatal pact which did no credit to either party. Wilson crossed the watershed and henceforth the stream of American influence flowed downwards on the wrong side of the Mount of Beatitudes.

There is no man whose real character has always eluded one more than that of Colonel House. This genial, kindly, unpretentious, insignificant looking little man baffled analysis. That he was intelligent, tactful, understanding and sympathetic, all who knew him will recognise and gladly recognise. But how deep did his intelligence, comprehension, and sympathies go? He saw more clearly than most men—or even women—to the bottom of the shallow waters which are to be found here and there in the greatest of oceans and of men. But could he penetrate the depths of human nature or of human events? I have come to the conclusion that he emphatically could not. Intellectually he was nowhere near the same plane as Wilson. But he was sane, even-tempered, adroit and wise in all things appertaining to the management of men and affairs. He had a well-balanced, but not a powerful mind. He got his ideas from his chief and he accepted them loyally and manipulated them skilfully. But he gave one the impression that had he served a different type of leader with a completely different set of ideas he would have adopted his theories with the same zeal and put them across with the same deftness. He was essentially a salesman and not a producer. He would have been an excellent Ambassador but a poor Foreign Minister. In the sphere of law with which I am

*The
limitations
of his
character*

acquainted he would have been an accomplished family lawyer—prudent, courteous, courtly and thoroughly loyal to his client. In every transaction I had with him he was frank and straightforward. His methods were not without guile but there was no deception. When I recognise that he was honourable in all his dealings, it is not inconsistent with this characteristic to say that he possessed craft. It is perhaps to his credit that he was not nearly as cunning as he thought he was.

House was generally liked by all those who transacted any business with him and it is a testimony to his sterling quality that those who took to him at the beginning continued to like him. It is a tragedy that the only exception to that experience was President Wilson himself, whom House had helped to high office and who

*His quarrel
with
Wilson*

incidentally gave to House his one avenue to celebrity. They quarrelled at the end of Wilson's day when the shadows were falling on his brilliant career. A long and continuous friendship is a great strain, and with men and women of strong personality it hardly ever survives the wear and tear of incessant contact over a prolonged period in trying times. My impression of the break between these two men, each remarkable in his way, is that Wilson was primarily at fault. I was present on the occasion which caused the coolness. Wilson was at the time involved in a bitter dispute with the Italians over Fiume. He threw himself into the contention between Italy and Yugoslavia with an intensity which I had never seen him display over any other difference of opinion in the framing of the Treaty. It was distracting his thoughts from infinitely more important issues and it was fretting his own nerve. House realised this with the eye of a devoted and tender friend and was anxious to find

some solution that would get the troublesome little matter out of the way. He talked to Clemenceau and to me on the subject and we found ourselves in complete sympathy with his desires. One day an informal meeting was summoned at the American headquarters at the Hotel Crillon to talk over one or two questions which needed straightening out. House invited M. Clemenceau and myself to come to his room half an hour before the Conference to talk over the Fiume imbroglio, in order to see whether we could find some way out that would on the whole satisfy all the contending parties. We had not been in the room very long before the door opened and Wilson appeared with a rigid and displeased countenance and an unfriendly eye. I have always thought someone must have communicated to him the fact that House had the two Premiers closeted with him in secret conference at his room in the Crillon. House had his rivals in the American camp who were not too pleased with the position accorded to him. As soon as Wilson entered the room, he said in a quiet but somewhat stern voice: "Hello, what is this about?" He was clearly upset, and as we discovered afterwards irreconcilably angry—not with the two foreign Premiers but with House for not informing him. He felt he ought to have been present when a question was being discussed in which he had so supreme an interest. It was undoubtedly an indiscretion on House's part but it was done entirely in order to save Wilson from an annoying problem which was undermining his strength.

House was never forgiven. I saw little of him after this unpleasant interview. He was not charged with any more errands from Wilson. The President was intensely jealous of his personal authority. He had at least one divine attribute: he was a jealous god; and in disregarding what was due to him House forgot that aspect of his

idol and thus committed the unforgivable sin. The snapping of the golden thread of a tried and affectionate friendship over a trivial misunderstanding easily explained was one of the premonitory symptoms of the fatal disease which soon after laid the President low.

When Wilson was stricken down and became a helpless paralytic, he refused to see Colonel House—once his most intimate friend—at his bedside. Although he lingered on for years and saw many of his old friends, Clemenceau and myself amongst them, House *he* would not receive. It would have been better for House's reputation had he left matters *there*, when sympathy would have been entirely *with* him. Instead of doing so he dealt a foul blow at a stricken man by publishing without Wilson's consent confidential letters which had passed between them. There was an obvious intent to "show Wilson up." It was always a suggestion of the feline about Colonel House's movements. But he was always such a friendly cat. He relates with a reminiscent purr how delighted he was when Clemenceau stroked him on the back and muttered pleasant things to him. That old savage could occasionally cajole and caress when he was bent on persuasion. And to win over House was one way of taming Wilson. House became as much Clemenceau's man as he had been and was still Wilson's. But the friendliest of cats have their claws. Even Wilson's enemies—and he had a multitude—were shocked at the treachery of the scratch and the moment chosen for the deed. Whilst they did not hesitate to make political capital out of the revelations they felt that this betrayal of intimate communications shook the temple of friendship to its foundations. House's chagrin had overcome his sense of honour.

*A cattish
action*

CHAPTER V

OTHER PERSONAL SKETCHES

I. POINCARÉ

DURING the whole of the sittings of the Congress I saw nothing of President Poincaré except at official receptions. I was never attracted by his personality. He possessed all those gifts which enable a man to make a successful career either in law or in politics. He had a logical mind, definite and clear-cut opinions which never changed and yet therefore gave an impression of stern honesty of conviction. Moreover he possessed considerable courage and dour tenacity.

*Consistently
and supremely
commonplace*

A man who changes his views, however honestly, is always suspect of doing so for personal motives. A man who sticks to them through all vicissitudes is acclaimed as a man of incorruptible sincerity. Poincaré never changed a single opinion he ever held. He was therefore trusted without question put.

When compared with Briand or Clemenceau, Poincaré's was a dull and sterile mind. He had no wit or imagination or play of fancy. He uttered the commonplaces that command respect and confidence. His was the triumph of commonplace qualities well proportioned, well trained and consistently well displayed; just the man to gain the trust of the numerous class he so adequately represented. He was a worthy chief of that populous and powerful clan. In competition for the high places with men of genius, a man like

Poincaré wins in 99 cases out of 100. Such a personage is supposed to be safe, and most people place safety first. He held high administrative office in France on three occasions. On the first he was snatched to the heaven of the Elysée before he had an opportunity to exhibit his powers or defects. The second time he became Premier his only service to France was that by his melodramatic invasion of Germany in search of reparations he exposed the folly of trying to make the Germans pay debts out of an empty cash-box and an overdrawn account. His fame will rest on his third Premiership, when he persuaded France that by devaluing its franc to a fifth of its pre-War standard its real wealth was increased. That was a genuine triumph of common sense and courage. He was the only man who could have succeeded in inducing all classes to accept that humiliating estimate of French credit.

In business he was a fussy little man who mistook bustle for energy. When Barthou represented him at the Genoa Conference, he came to me one morning and said: "I have just received my nine-hundredth telegram this morning from Poincaré!" The Conference was then about halfway through. Clemenceau suffered a good deal from this fussiness, especially during the Peace Conference. He constantly sent for the aged and burdened Premier to bother him about the Rhineland and about Reparations. One morning Clemenceau, who was always punctual, kept the Congress waiting for nearly an hour. His Secretary explained that Poincaré had sent for him to the Elysée. When the Tiger arrived, he burst into the room blowing and puffing, apologised for his lateness and then, coming

up to me, said in my ear: "Cannot you lend me George the Fifth for a short time?" Clemenceau loathed and despised Poincaré. That was also President Wilson's opinion of him. It was also Bonar Law's impression of the man. Clemenceau had a sincere admiration and respect for intellectual power, even when he disapproved of the use to which it was put. Jaurès, the great Socialist leader, was one of Clemenceau's most formidable parliamentary antagonists. But Clemenceau told me with pride that he thought him the greatest orator he had ever heard. Of Poincaré, on the other hand, he had no opinion as a speaker, a politician or a man. Speaking of him in the latter capacity, he once asked me: "Do you know what the word Poincaré means?—*Point*: not; *carré*: square!" He suspected him during the Peace negotiations of intriguing behind his (Clemenceau's) back with Foch and the Extreme Right to annex the Rhineland and afterwards to set up little republics there. At that time I had not had any direct dealings with Poincaré. I subsequently had and I now accept fully Clemenceau's and Wilson's estimate of him. An agreement with Poincaré simply meant that he thought an open break was inconvenient at that time. He was one of those men who, having acquired a reputation for honesty, can afford to be tricky.

I afterwards had an opportunity of measuring his intelligence when he visited London in 1922 to discuss the non-payment of Germany's reparation instalments. He actually proposed that we should demand payment in German marks. They stood then at 900 to the pound. I asked him who would take them, and what use could be made of them by the recipient. He replied that England would take them at their nominal

value. How we were to cash them he did not explain. Nor had he considered what the effect would be on the value of the mark of placing milliards of marks on the money market.

The fact that he was a Lorrainer, born and brought up in sight of the German eagle waving over the ravished provinces of France, bred in him an implacable enmity for Germany and all Germans. Anti-clericalism was with him a conviction; anti-Germanism was a passion. That gave him a special hold on the France that had been ravaged by the German legions in the Great War. It was a disaster to France and to Europe. Where a statesman was needed who realised that if it is to be wisely exploited victory must be utilised with clemency and restraint, Poincaré made it impossible for any French Prime Minister to exert these qualities. He would not tolerate any compromise, concession or conciliation. He was bent on keeping Germany down. He was more responsible than any other man for the refusal of France to implement the disarmament provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. He stimulated and subsidised the armaments of Poland and Czecho-Slovakia which created such a ferment of uneasiness in disarmed Germany. He encouraged insurrection in the Rhineland against the authority of the Reich. He intrigued with the anti-German elements in Britain to thwart every effort in the direction of restoring goodwill in Europe and he completely baffled Briand's endeavour in that direction. He is the true creator of modern Germany with its great and growing armaments, and should this end in another conflict the catastrophe will have been engineered by Poincaré. His dead hand lies heavy on Europe to-day.

2. ORLANDO AND SONNINO

The two Italian delegates—Signor Orlando, the Premier, and Baron Sonnino, the Foreign Secretary—were both men of distinction and capacity.

Orlando But the antithesis between them was
the orator marked and occasionally developed into an antagonism of purpose and policy.

Signor Orlando was a learned, cultured and eminent lawyer, possessing considerable oratorical gifts. As he had to express himself at our Conferences in French, his powers were never exhibited at their best. When he spoke in his own language, either in the Italian Parliament, or to great crowds outside, I am told he was exceedingly effective. This, coupled with the deep respect he had won by his integrity and genuine patriotism, was the secret of his strength. He had an amiable and attractive personality which made him an extremely pleasant man to do business with. His interventions at Conferences were always sensible and to the point. His views were Liberal and democratic. There was no fundamental difference of outlook or principle between him and President Wilson, and I always thought that if the President had taken more trouble to talk things over with him on a friendly basis, instead of lecturing him from on high, the wretched quarrel that developed over Fiume and was never settled between the two could have been accommodated.

Baron Sonnino was a man of a totally different type. He was dour, rigid and intractable. He was not an Italian by race or origin. His father was a Hebrew. He told me his mother was Welsh. Both of them stubborn races, not easily persuaded. One parent may have accounted for his tenacity and toughness in a bargain

—the other may have explained the obstinacy with which he held to his opinions. But whatever his racial origin, he was Italian through and through in his policy and patriotism. To him the War was not a fight for international right and human liberty. His interest in either of these two ideals was torpid and a little scornful. The victory was to him a supreme chance for extending the boundaries and increasing the security, the importance and the prestige of Italy. That is why he threw over the Triple Alliance and used the whole of his influence to induce Italy to join the Allies. He was shrewd enough to see that the Central Powers could give Italy nothing for either alliance or neutrality. Austria would not sacrifice valuable towns and seaports or formidable mountain bastions to enrich and strengthen Italy at the expense of the Austrian Empire. Germany could not persuade Turkey to surrender any part of the Anatolian littoral in order to placate Italy or purchase Italian support. And as to Germany herself, it was more than she could do to save her own colonies without helping Italy to acquire new African territories. Moreover Italian statesmen did not display any great eagerness for African territory. Neither during the War nor at the Peace Conference did they press for any share in the German colonies. Sonnino, the diplomatist, knew he could drive a better bargain with the Western Allies, and he therefore plumped for them.

In the course of our discussions questions like the League of Nations, disarmament and international labour did not interest Sonnino much. At the conference table he looked like a man waiting in bored sullenness for the only question that mattered to come up: that is, what Italy was going to get out of the spoils of victory. When he occasionally

intervened in discussions on other questions, it had generally a direct or oblique reference to this paramount consideration. He had a nervous, jumpy manner of speech, all his own. He had one curious mannerism—to emphasise his points he constantly jerked his right hand towards his breast as if he were pulling invisible levers. He did pull levers but they were not invisible. What he said was effectively and sometimes picturesquely phrased. For instance, when Colonel House in pressing the Wilson point about the Freedom of the Seas, seemed to be hostile to the British view as to our right to use our Navy to cripple an enemy, Sonnino said that different animals fought with different weapons: some used their teeth, some their claws, others their fangs. So with nations—some fought with their armies, others with their navies. I heard him at a great meeting at the Queen's Hall using a felicitous illustration to explain why, although he had a workable knowledge of the English language, he was unable to deliver a speech in that tongue. He said that a language of which you had no perfect mastery was like a tram—it took you near your destination but not right up to the door.

*Defects
as a
diplomat*

He was a resolute man, but too unbending to make a first-class diplomatist. He lacked suppleness. That is why he did not make the best use for Italy of the wonderful opportunity presented to her by the great part she had played—directly or indirectly—in the break up of the German, Austrian and Turkish Empires. There were certain concessions he had set his mind on securing. He would have no others, although they were much better from the Italian standpoint. The two Italian delegates were each in his way exceptionally able men, but they were not a good team. When trouble came Orlando

